

# Husker Illustrated

NEWS PLEASE RUSH

Volume 27, No. 9

SEPT. 15, 2007 • \$3.95

## Just Enough

Late interception  
saves Huskers;  
mighty USC up next

FEATURING

CARL NICKS



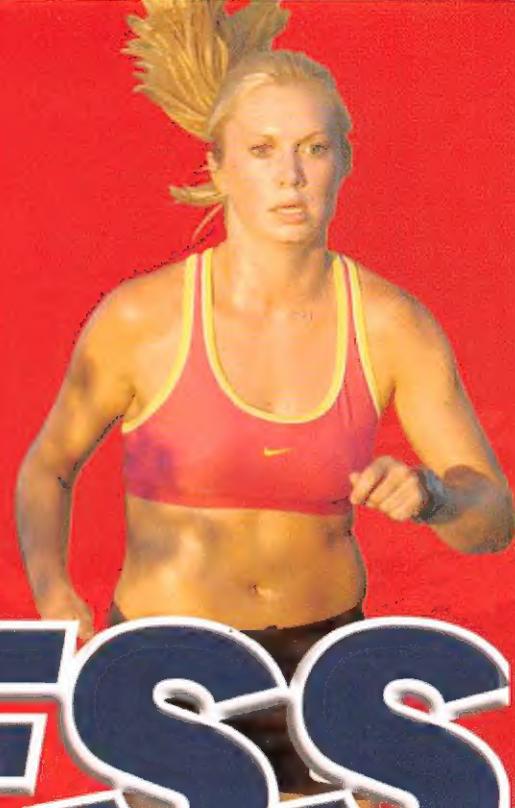
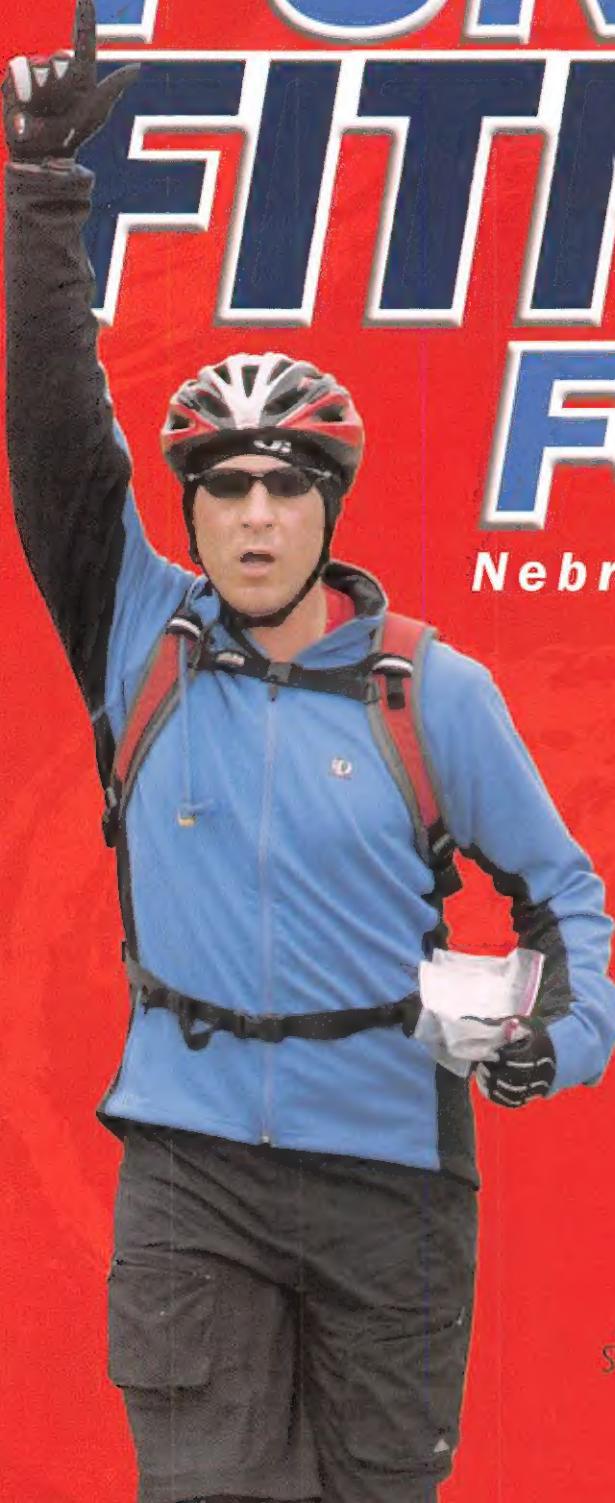


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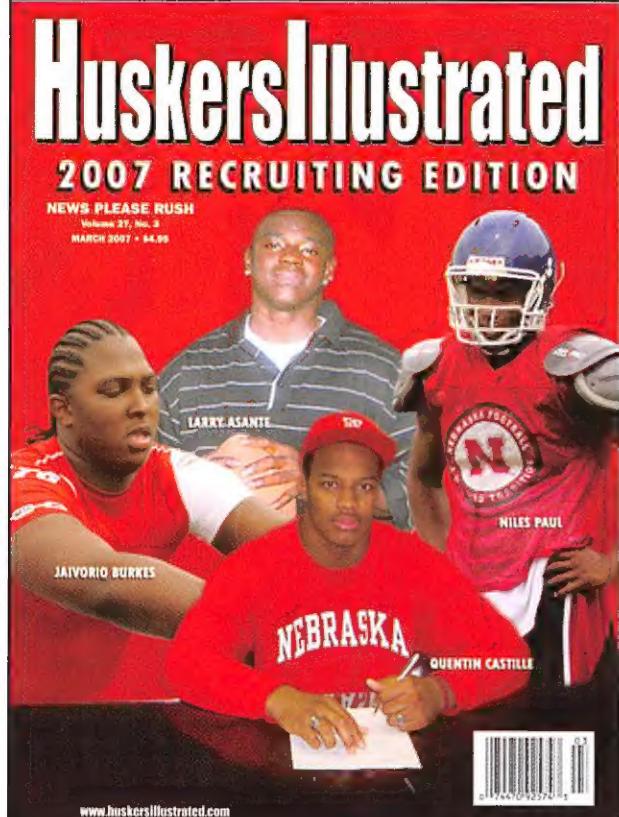
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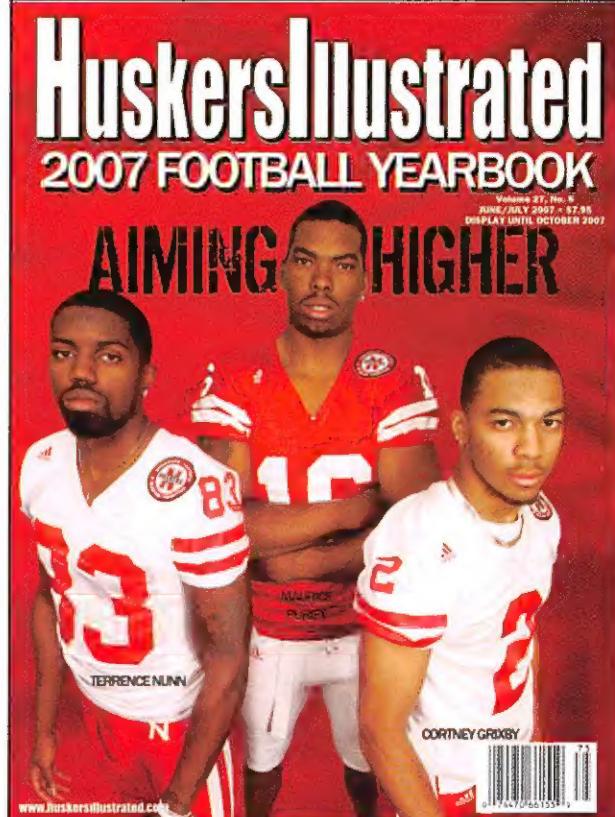
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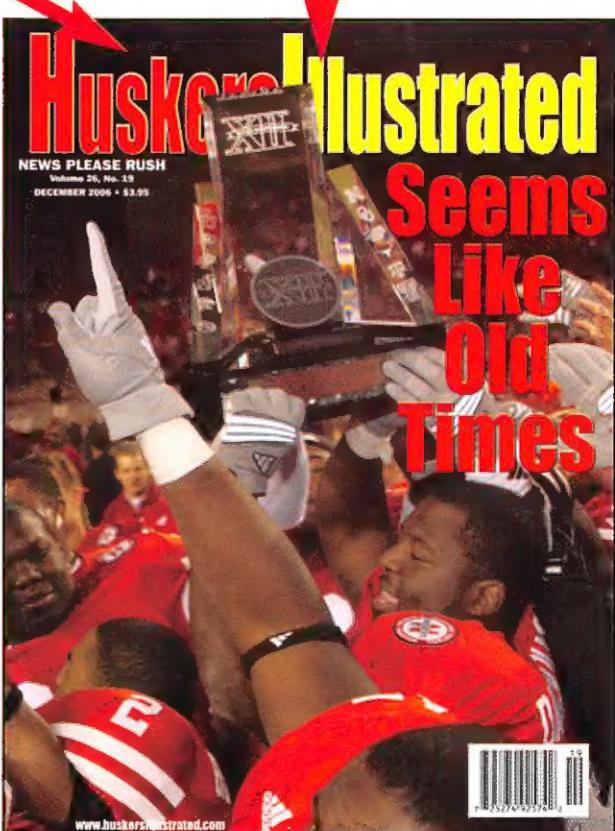
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## Not Pretty, But A W

**Huskers do just enough for road victory leading up to showdown with mighty USC**



**Brian  
HILL**

IN TRYING to forecast Nebraska's 2007 fortunes, the road trip to Wake Forest looked like anything but a sure thing. That the game stood seven days before the highly anticipated extravaganza against top-ranked Southern California certainly added to the challenge.

The Demon Deacons were coming off an 11-3 season that included an Atlantic Coast Conference title and a spot in the Orange Bowl, where they lost to Louisville to finish 17th and 18th in the final rankings. Wake Forest was playing its home-opener, motivated by a disappointing loss at Boston College in its season-opener.

Realistically, Nebraska was not likely to fly into Winston-Salem, N.C., and take care of the Demon Deacons the way it did undermanned Nevada in a 52-10 romp in the opener in Lincoln.

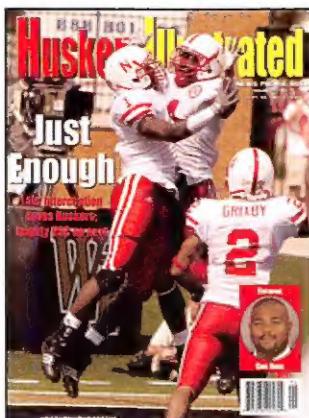
And the Huskers did just enough to win, holding off the host team playing without sophomore quarterback Riley Skinner, one of eight returning starters on offense.

For much of the game, Wake Forest may have looked stronger, faster, more inspired, etc., but Nebraska did what it had to do at the right times, coming from behind twice to come away with a 20-17 victory.

"We just really preached to our players to stay in there, keep fighting, keep swinging and keep punching," coach Bill Callahan said in his postgame news

### ON THE COVER

Cornerback Zack Bowman (1) celebrates with safety Larry Asante (4) after Bowman's interception in the end zone in the fourth quarter. *Cover photo by Scott Bruhn*.



conference, "because that's the main thing, how you respond to adverse conditions on the road."

You can read more about Nebraska's first road trip and look ahead to the USC visit in this edition of *Huskers Illustrated*. In this week's player feature, contributing editor Mike Babcock takes a look at senior offensive tackle Carl Nicks. Freshman linebacker Thomas Grove answers "10 Questions."

As always, we have more than football. Junior Rachel Schwartz is featured in our weekly look at the No. 1-ranked Nebraska volleyball team, and you can read part one of an extensive interview with basketball coach Doc Sadler.

Sadler, entering his second season at NU, said "There's no question the support from administration, from the fans, that I think you've got to have in order to have a program, is in place. So that's good."

That fan support is legendary for the football program and was in evidence again on a 90-degree day in Winston-Salem. The capacity of Groves Stadium is listed at 31,500, and there was a strong presence of red in the crowd of 32,483, which was still the smallest to see Nebraska in 16 years.

They saw the Huskers commit three turnovers, including a bizarre play when quarterback Sam Keller lost the football on what was ruled an interception at the NU 10 midway through the fourth quarter. But three plays later, Nebraska cornerback Zack Bowman intercepted a Brett Hodges pass in the end zone to preserve the 20-17 lead.

The NU defense would have to make one more stop, which ended on a fourth-down play that the Wake Forest faithful thought was pass interference.

The Huskers ran out the last 1:11 to survive a character-building road test.

Now, the ultimate test — USC. ■

# Huskers Illustrated

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**NATIONAL DISTRIBUTOR**  
G Associates Inc.

*Huskers Illustrated* (ISSN 0279-3474) is published monthly January through May and August, bi-monthly June/July and weekly September through mid-December except open dates. Single issue cost \$3.95 (yearbook \$7.95); subscription rate for one year (19 issues) is \$51.95. First Class postage is available for an additional charge of \$19.00 per year. Foreign postage \$34.00.

*Huskers Illustrated* is published by Landmark Community Newspapers, 2623 Regency Rd., Lexington, KY 40503. Periodicals postage paid at Lexington, KY, and additional mailing offices.

**Postmaster:** Send address changes to *Huskers Illustrated*, 2623 Regency Road, Lexington, KY 40503.

Address all editorial-related correspondence to *Huskers Illustrated*, 3210 NW 3rd St., Lincoln, NE 68521.

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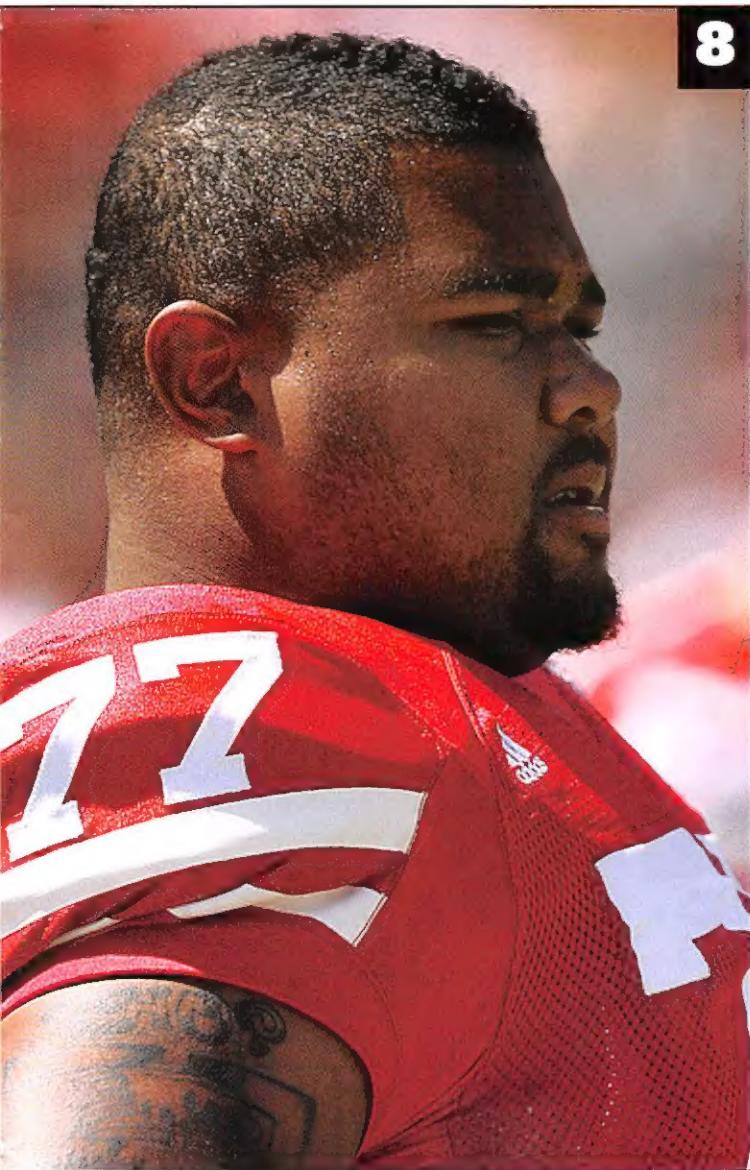
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Senior offensive tackle Carl Nicks would have come to Nebraska with the top-ranked Southern California football team this season had the Trojans followed through on a scholarship offer without his having to grayshirt. *By Mike Babcock*

## NEXT ISSUE

The USC review/Ball State preview edition will be mailed on Sept. 17. Check for updates at [huskersillustrated.com](http://huskersillustrated.com).

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## Looking Out For No. 1

**Huskers happy to have home-field advantage for this shot at top-ranked Southern California**



**Terry  
DOUGLASS**

WHILE THE COACHES AND PLAYERS who actually have to prepare to face and play talent-rich Southern California might argue otherwise, Nebraska football fans will get to witness a rare treat when the Cornhuskers play host to the No. 1-ranked Trojans.

The matchup against the top-ranked team in the Associated Press media poll marks the first time the Huskers have gotten a No. 1 team at home since upsetting Oklahoma 17-14 in 1978. Nebraska senior middle linebacker Corey McKeon said he fully expects Big Red fans will be bringing their A-game for this one.

"To have the No. 1 team coming here, I think it means more for the Husker fans than anything," McKeon said. "They're juiced up. They're geeked up. They're going to be the 12th player on the field."

In the long and storied history of Nebraska football, the Huskers have annually mixed it up with some of the best teams in the country. But while playing highly regarded opponents is really nothing new for Nebraska, the number of games the program has played against teams ranked No. 1 in the Associated Press media poll is surprisingly few and far between. Since the inception of the AP poll in 1934, the Huskers have faced just 11 top-ranked teams, posting a 1-10 record in those games.

Nebraska's last four tests against No. 1 teams — 2001 and 1991 against Miami (Fla.), 1993 against Florida State and 1981 against Clemson — have come in bowl games. The last time the Huskers played a top-ranked team at home also marked their only win against a No. 1 with the memorable 1978 win over Oklahoma that brought the goal posts down at Memorial Stadium.

McKeon and his teammates would absolutely love to incite a similar celebration following the much-anticipated USC game.

"Obviously, they're a high-powered team," said McKeon, whose team lost to the Trojans 28-10 last season in the Los Angeles Coliseum. "We went to their place last year and thought we did well — didn't do great — and we were there with them, but just we just didn't make the big plays we needed to win the game."

McKeon said the approach to play Southern California requires a mixture of intensity and calm.

"On one hand, it's just another team, and we have to execute and play the game like we know we're capable of," McKeon said. "At the same time, you know you've got to up your game."

There's little doubt that Nebraska fans will be sky high for this one. The buzz about the Trojans coming to town started building in the offseason with the Lincoln Journal Star publishing an article over the summer, noting that fans can expect to

pay through the nose for a hotel room in the capitol city during USC weekend.

A Lincoln native, Nebraska senior linebacker Bo Ruud said prior to the season that he's been looking forward to the USC game for quite some time.

"It's so much fun to just be a part of that," Ruud said in July at the Big 12 Conference's media days. "The whole town just loves it, so that to me is the best part of college football."

After finishing 0-4 last season against teams that were ranked in the top 10 at the time of the game — losing to USC, Texas, Oklahoma and Auburn — Nebraska is hungry for a so-called "signature" victory to show the country that the program has rejoined the nation's elite.

Even if Nebraska does manage to knock off USC, the Huskers know that many challenges still await with what looks like a difficult schedule. Heading into the season, NU was scheduled to play eight teams that participated in bowl games last season, including a pair of 2006 BCS qualifiers in Wake Forest (Orange Bowl) and Southern California (Rose Bowl).

Nebraska's remaining road schedule features games at Big 12 North Division favorite Missouri and South Division favorite Texas. There's also a trip to Kansas — the Huskers lost 40-15 last time they played in Lawrence — and the traditional post-Thanksgiving game against Colorado that returns to Boulder this year.

"Your focus and concentration has got to be spot-on week in and week out," NU coach Bill Callahan said of his team's schedule. "You can't have a lapse in your focus, in your preparation, and that's where it all starts."

"Really, the games are played during the week, as we like to say, and you don't want to see your team tail off or treat anybody in a light fashion."

The Huskers' home slate is no cakewalk, either. By the time it's finished, five 2006 bowl participants will have come to Memorial Stadium: Nevada, Southern California, Oklahoma State, Texas A&M and Kansas State.

The challenge appeals to Ruud.

"If we can play and beat the best teams in the country, it only sets us up for greater things," Ruud said.

But right now, it's difficult to imagine the anticipation for any of those games being greater the pregame fervor that exists for USC.

"I expect the atmosphere to be great, being that the USC game is currently the biggest game of the year, but you never know," McKeon said. "If we beat USC, then Missouri or Texas could be the biggest game of the year, and then if we could beat them, Kansas State would be the biggest game of the year."

"Every game's big. In college football, you don't take weeks off." ■

**Terry Douglass** is the sports editor of the Grand Island (Neb.) Independent. He can be reached at [terry.douglass@msn.com](mailto:terry.douglass@msn.com).

## Not Missing A Beat

**USC appears to have ample talent to overcome heavy losses in NFL Draft**



**Curt  
McKEEVER**

PETE CARROLL ADMITTED to being curious over how the wide receivers on his Southern California football team would handle themselves during the Trojans' Sept. 1 season opener against Idaho.

USC did, after all, incur heavy losses in the 2007 NFL Draft. Dwayne Jarrett, the school's all-time receptions leader who caught a Pac-10 record 41 touchdown passes, declared one year early and went in the second round to Carolina. Steve Smith, who led the 2006 Trojans with 71 catches, went in the same round to the New York Giants.

But for Carroll, saying your curious about a position hardly indicates concern.

More than likely, he knows the Men of Troy have ample receiving talent. He's just curious to see if it can live up to the NFL-caliber level that's becoming prevalent throughout his program.

Yes, indeed, Nebraska is about to play a top-ranked juggernaut, capable of interchanging players and not missing a beat.

Carson Palmer and Matt Leinart are gone, but you don't really catch a break in John David Booty.

And while Patrick Turner and David Ausberry haven't got the "wow" factor of Jarrett or Smith, that may be a temporary condition. That's usually how it works at SC.

This summer, first-year Stanford coach Jim Harbaugh noted at the Pac-10 media days that he thought Carroll might have the best college team he's ever seen.

And the reaction to that comment?

"Well, I guess Jim liked the video that he saw," Idaho's first-year coach Robb Akey quipped.

Seriously, Akey, an assistant at Washington State before taking over the Vandals program, knew exactly what Harbaugh meant. And he knew it before Idaho dropped its game to the Trojans 38-10.

"They're a better outfit when you look at size and speed and that type of thing than anybody that's going to be on our schedule this year," he said. "The game next week (against Cal Poly) ought to appear like it's being played at a little slower pace."

USC jumped out to a 21-0 lead, then, after appearing to become bored with things and allowing Idaho to put up 182 yards of first-half offense, put the Vandals away by scoring 17 unanswered points while holding the visitors without a first down in the third quarter.

"We could do anything we needed to," Carroll said afterwards, "but as is always the case, you get in your own way."

Some of that may stem from having to keep all the talent he has happy and in sync. It's a problem most major college football coaches would envy.

For instance, USC has six Parade All-America running backs on its roster, and that number was seven until Emmanuel Moody transferred to Florida in August.

Against Idaho, Stafon Johnson, who had only three carries last season, rushed for 64 yards on 12 attempts, while C.J. Gable had 68 yards on eight tries and caught his first career touchdown pass.

Freshman fullback Stanley Havili and sophomore receiver Vidal Hazelton also caught touchdown passes from Booty, who completed 21 of 32 passes for 206 yards out of a no-frills package, before he watched most of the fourth quarter from the sideline.

"I could have played better," said Booty, whose 391-yard, four-touchdown performance against Michigan in last season's Rose Bowl thrust him into the lead pack for this year's Heisman Trophy. "I didn't make a couple of throws I feel like I usually can make in my sleep."

Oh well, with an open week before the Nebraska game, he'll have time to sharpen up. And when that rolls around, he should also be able to rely on the 6-foot-4 junior Turner, who sat out the opener after suffering a neck stinger earlier in the week.

The Trojans also were missing center Matt Spanos (torn right triceps muscle). But they just stuck another Parade All-American in the lineup (Kristofer O'Dowd, who became the first true freshman to start for them at the spot) and plowed ahead.

"Defensively, it took an awful lot to get into the game," Akey noted. "We had bodies where they belonged, but were not making plays, which is not unusual in your first game — and it also had something to do with who we were playing."

Had USC's offense sputtered, the Trojans have a defense that has 10 returning starters and is likely to be the best of Carroll's seven teams.

After ranking 38th nationally in turnover margin last season (33 spots lower than where any of Carroll's first teams finished), the Trojans are scrapping a one-year experiment at a 3-4 look, that was aimed to take advantage of linebacker speed, and going back to a 4-3 front designed to improve the pass rush and create more takeaway opportunities.

But it's not like USC needs to reinvent itself.

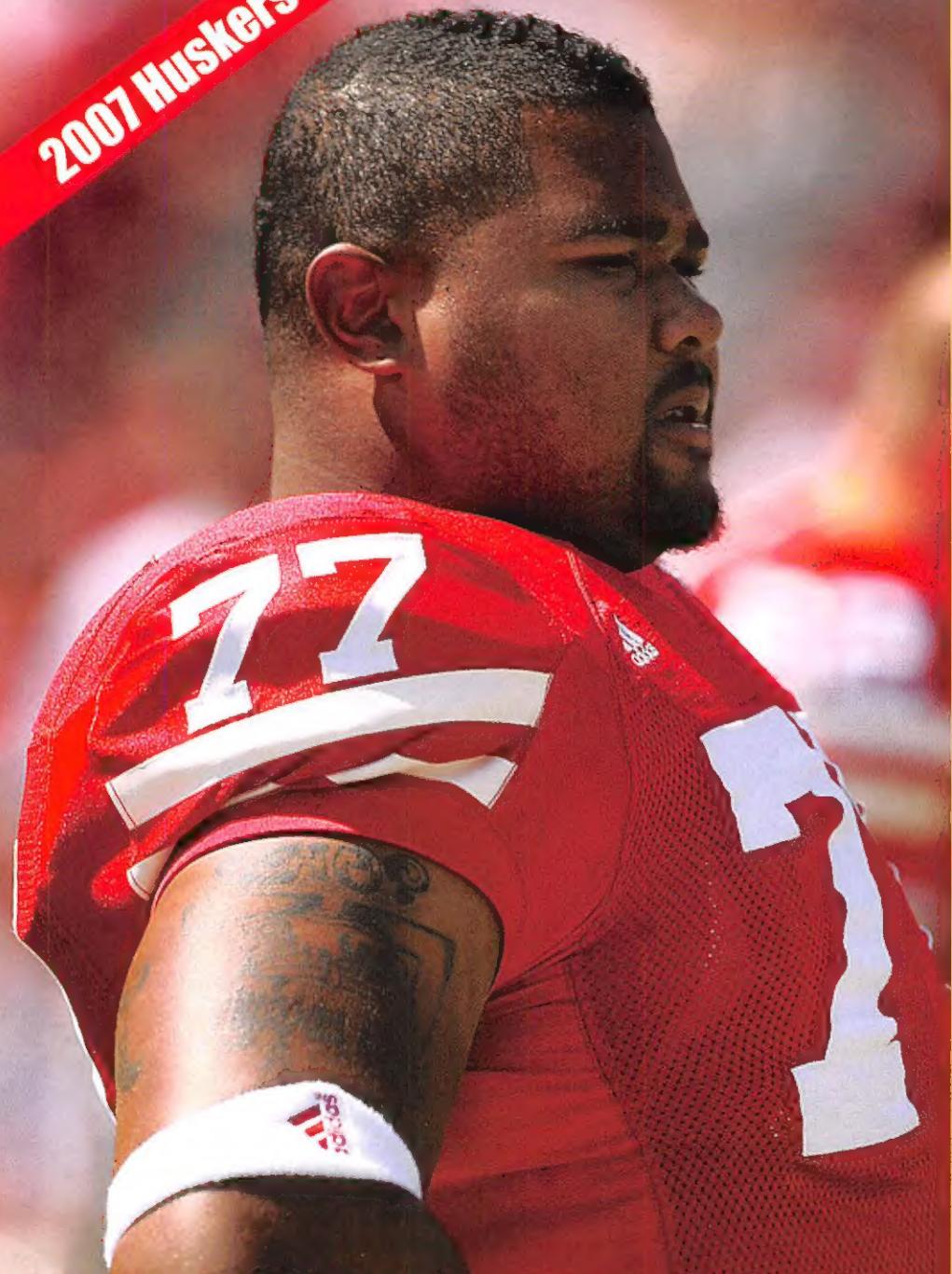
In their last 61 games, the Trojans are 57-4, and the losses are by a combined total of 12 points.

"I'm happy that we won, and let's get to work for the next one," Carroll said after his club had taken care of Idaho. "We know we have a very difficult matchup in two weeks."

I'm guessing there was more curiosity in his voice than concern. ■

**Curt McKeever** is a sportswriter for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football, he is the primary beat writer for baseball. Curt can be reached at cmckeever@journalstar.com

2007 Huskers



**CARL NICKS**  
Offensive Tackle

# 1'm Happy Where I Ended Up'

By MIKE BABCOCK • PHOTOS: SCOTT BRUHN

Even at age 4, his daughter Serena knows.

At least, "she kind of has an idea," Carl Nicks said.

When she sees a football game on television, she'll want to know if her daddy is playing. Last season, after seeing Nebraska play, she told her dad it wasn't nice that he was hitting guys.

"I guess that's a good thing, right?" he said. Good in understanding that violence is never a solution to a problem. But good also in that she knows her dad is a football player.

And if things work out as he would like, he'll be a football player for a few years to come. "As far as it takes me," he said. "I'm just going to keep working my butt off every day."

So far, football has taken Nicks from North High School in Salinas, Calif., to New Mexico State, back to Salinas and Hartnell College and then out to Nebraska.

He would have come to Nebraska with the top-ranked USC football team this season had the Trojans followed through on a scholarship offer without his having to grayshirt.

That's how he ended up at New Mexico State, playing defensive tackle for then-Aggies head coach Tony Samuel, the former Cornhusker player and assistant coach.

Growing up in Salinas, which is much closer to San Francisco than to Los Angeles, he wanted to play at USC. He made an early oral commitment only to be told when the time to sign a letter of intent came that he would have to delay his enrollment as a full-time student until mid-school year.

"It was like, 'We signed all these running backs,'" he said.

His parents weren't happy and neither was he. Given his age at the time, "maybe I resented it a lot," Nicks said. "But it is what it is. It happened for a reason. I'm happy where I ended up."

Ended up as in Nebraska, not New Mexico State.

Because of his commitment to USC, recruiters quit calling. New Mexico State came in late, however, and told him he could play right away, he said. So he packed up for Las Cruces.

His position coach there was former Cornhusker middle guard Rich Glover, the 1972 Outland Trophy and Lombardi Award winner. Glover talked about Nebraska all the time.

Nicks got along with Glover well enough that they kept in touch after he returned home to Salinas after playing as a true freshman. He began pre-season practice, made it through two-a-days, in what would have been his sophomore year. But he was unhappy. His parents encouraged him to stay. But his mind was made up. He was going to leave New Mexico State, go home and enroll at Hartnell College.

Since the Hartnell football team had already played a couple of games by the time he enrolled, he sat out the 2004 season as a redshirt, not wanting to waste eligibility.

He had never intended to give up football. He was just determined to play elsewhere. Hartnell would be his way station - and as it turned out, where he would return to offensive tackle.

Nicks had played both offense and defense in high school, of course. And he was more comfortable in the offensive line, even though defensive linemen can make plays and get noticed.

For an offensive lineman, the less notice, the better. "Hopefully, no one says anything about us," he said. "But if you see our quarterbacks throwing for thousands of yards and our running backs rushing for hundreds of yards, it all works out in the end. "Our whole thing is, if we're playing a team with a good defensive end or good nose tackle, our whole glory is to stop him from making tackles or sacks."

"If we do that, our coaches praise us and our teammates praise us."

And that's praise enough for an offensive lineman.

Still, Nicks drew praise beyond the locker room at Hartnell College. He earned All-America recognition from the California Community College Football Coaches Association for a championship team, and the recruiting began anew. This time, however, "I knew the song and dance, what everybody was going to be pitching," he said. "I had to decide who was being honest and who wasn't."

Early on, he decided Nebraska offensive line coach Dennis Wagner was being honest. Wagner called at the earliest possible time in the recruiting period and "just set himself apart from everybody else, the way he acted," said Nicks. "He was always saying, 'You're my franchise. You're the guy I want.'"

Nicks was projected as a left tackle, but he began his Cornhusker career playing on the right side. He was befriended by then-sophomore Matt Slauson, who plays both guard and tackle. Wagner assigned Slauson to help him adjust, in fact, and the two immediately connected.

"The first time I met him, I was like, 'Wow, this guy is huge,'" said Slauson. "I always think that. When I met (Jacob) Hickman, I was like, 'This guy's enormous.' But he's a lot smaller than me."

Slauson is listed at 6-foot-5, 335 pounds, Hickman at 6-4, 285. Nicks, however, is more Slauson's size, 6-5 (in football shoes 6-6, he's quick to point out) and 330 — 340 to start training camp.

"When I got asked by 'Wags' to work with him a little bit, go over some plays, techniques, I thought, 'This guy's going to be good.' That was my initial thought," Slauson said. "He's really wide, but he's got great feet and a really long reach. And because of his size, that helps him. Guys have to go an extra step just to get around him. You need feet and hands. And he's got both."

Slauson didn't know Nicks played defensive tackle at New Mexico State.

"It does surprise me," said Slauson. "He's a big defensive lineman."

If one were to design a defensive lineman, "he's the opposite," Slauson said.

Nicks had an impression of Nebraska from being around Glover, whose passion for his alma mater is



Senior Carl Nicks has settled in at left tackle after playing in 11 games and starting twice on the right side in 2006.

undiminished, according to Nicks. "It wasn't a big shock," he said. "I kind of had an idea of what to expect, but nothing like this. The fans were a big shock, actually. Just going uptown, everybody knows who you are. You're a big deal out here. As far as football, I knew it was going to be real hard."

"This is your job, a 24-hour job. I just stepped it up a little bit more than I anticipated."

Even though he had an idea of what to expect, Nicks needed "about five or six months" to adjust to Nebraska as well as to the football program. The transition might have been a little easier and quicker had he been able to arrive during the summer. Because he had to finish some class work at Hartnell, however, he

didn't get to Lincoln until a couple of days before the start of training camp.

He wasn't used to Nebraska's heat and humidity, and coach Bill Callahan's playbook was imposing. He had been told the playbook might have been simplified since Callahan's arrival two years before. "They said it's a lot easier than it was," he said soon after camp began. "I was like, 'Are you kidding?'"

He compared learning the terminology to learning Chinese. If he could pick it up quickly, he could probably be speaking fluent French and German quickly, too, he joked.

Terminology was the big thing. "The plays are so long. You have to listen to the whole play. Your mind can just wander. So that took a long time to adjust to," he said.

**"I kind of had an idea of what to expect, but nothing like this. The fans were a big shock, actually. Just going uptown, everybody knows who you are."**

— Carl Nicks on returning to Nebraska

"It's all mental: How are you going to get the results?"

Memorization won't do the job. Learning Callahan's complex system requires repetition. If you repeat each play 50 times a day in practice, it becomes second nature, instinctive almost. "If you think you're going to memorize this whole playbook, you've got another think coming," said Nicks.

Playing against defensive teammates such as Adam Carriker and Jay Moore during practice last season also made him better. He was introduced to Carriker early on, when matched up against him in a one-on-one Oklahoma drill. Carriker would be a first-round NFL draft pick, Nicks was told.

He wasn't sure what happened for several periods after the two collided.

All he knew was, his head was ringing and Carriker was "no joke."

After backing up at right tackle, Nicks started twice late in the season, when Slauson was injured. Then in the spring he was moved to left tackle, as Wagner had told him he would be.

The transition wasn't difficult because of his experience in high school and junior college. There's probably more pressure playing on the left side, according to Nicks, obviously because that's the quarterback's blindside, and he's responsible for keeping the quarterback healthy.

"You have to be a little faster, just smarter really," he said.

Slauson has compared playing guard to a train wreck, while playing tackle is more like a dance, requiring finesse. That would seem an anomaly given someone the size of Nicks.

But unlike the jam-up inside with the center and guards, tackle is "pretty much one-on-one all the time, so

it's who's better. That's how I look at it," said Nicks. "If you've got me, being as big as I am, trying to block a 260-pound defensive end, it's all speed. It takes a lot of finesse."

Nicks was "really quiet" when Slauson first met him. He's still quiet, for that matter, on the field, Slauson said. "In the locker room, he's friendly and talkative.

"But when it comes to games, he's always quiet."

Lydon Murtha, also a tackle, is the "jester" among the offensive linemen, according to Nicks. And guard Andy Christensen is the most serious

of the group. "He's real quiet."

Nicks may have stepped out of a character a little bit when he got a Mohawk haircut and shaved his jersey number (77) in the back prior to the start of training camp. He was the first in the barber's chair, followed by senior wide receivers Terrence Nunn and Maurice Purify.

Other players claimed they started the Mohawk fad. Not so, Nicks said.

Whoever started the Mohawk haircuts, training camp is over and everyone is down to business now. His job still requires violence, hitting guys. But there's more to it than that.

A couple of weeks into spring practice, he was comfortable again playing left tackle. By then, he understood the playbook through constant repetition. He knew whom he was supposed to block, and of equal importance, he knew whom everybody else was supposed to be blocking.

"Communication is the key," Nicks said. "That's what the coaches stress. When I first got here, I thought I knew what it was. But I had to learn it." ■

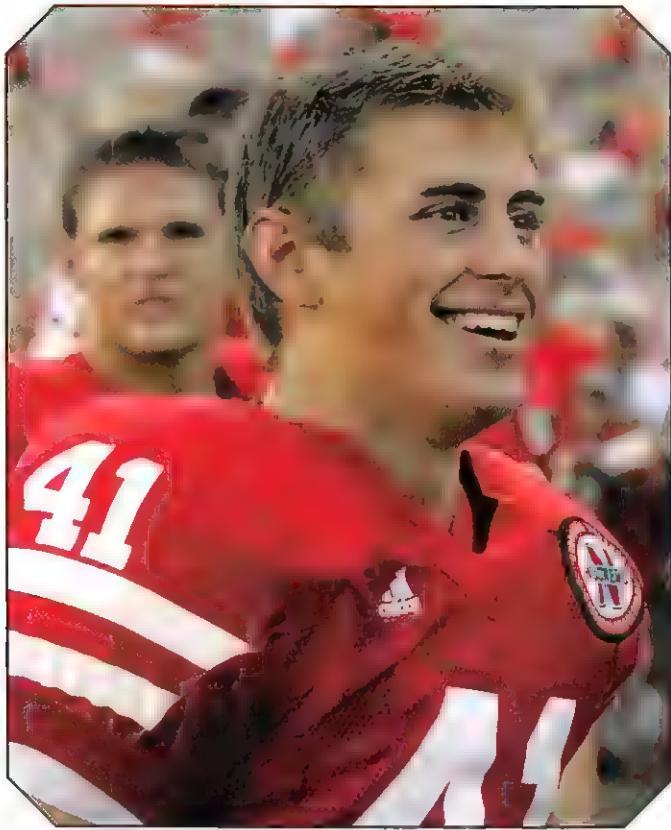
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# 10 QUESTIONS



## with **THOMAS GROVE**

**Freshman Linebacker  
Arlington, Neb.**

not sure why, but he gave me a pretty good shot. Knock me off my feet? Oh yeh. We had pads on."

**If your life were made into a movie, whom would you pick to play the part of your character?**

"These are some strange questions. I'm going to have to say Sean Connery because he's my favorite actor of all time. So I'm going to have to go with Sean Connery."

**If you could only eat one thing for the next month, what would it be?**

"Chinese food, definitely, sweet and sour chicken. I could eat that all day. Not in Arlington, we don't have too many restaurants in a small town. I'd have to go to Fremont or Omaha for it."

**What three things would you absolutely have to have on your iPod?**

"Probably the Tunnel Walk; it gives me goosebumps every time. And probably my warm-up mix, all kinds of stuff. I've got anything from AC/DC to Linkin Park. Anything that gets me going. Who does the Tunnel walk? I'm not sure."

**What's your favorite television program?**

"'Seinfeld,' hands down 'Seinfeld'. Kramer is, by far, my favorite character. I've got many favorite episodes. I don't think I could narrow one down."

**What do you remember about the first Nebraska football game you ever attended?**

"I can't remember the game, but I couldn't have been more than a couple of years in elementary school. It was like 100-something degrees and we were sitting almost at the top. I can't even remember which end or side. I remember the big thing was the noise, especially when I was that young. It was just a lot of noise. We tried to make at least one or two games a year, make it a tradition."

**If you were given \$100,000 and had to spend it, couldn't save it, what would you buy?**

"Shoot, I would definitely have to set up my parents with a nice house because they're a huge reason why I'm here. So I'd have to throw some money back at them."

**If you could spend 30 minutes with a celebrity, sports or otherwise, who would it be and what would you want to ask?**

"I think I'm going to have to go back to Sean Connery, just to ask what it's like being 'the man.' I grew up around a lot of Bond movies, and I'm still a big fan of Sean Connery."

**If you were to recommend a book to someone, what book would it be?**

"I'm just starting to read . . . I can't remember the title. It's the (football) coach from Indianapolis (Tony Dungy), 'Quiet Strength,' I think it's called. I just started reading it. His son died. I do a lot of light reading in the summer."

**Sky diving, bungee jumping or rock climbing?**

"Sky diving, definitely. It's something I've always wanted to do. But I'm too cheap to put up the money to go do it. Bungee jumping, no way; I don't think I could do that. Sky diving would be a kick, I think. It would be so much fun." ■

**S**o who is this Thomas Grove, anyway? Well, he's a freshman walk-on, and he was part of the Nebraska football team's training camp roster of 105.

That's fairly unusual for a freshman walk-on, though four others were invited this year, all from Nebraska: Austin Cassidy (Lincoln), Mike Masin (Lincoln), Mike Hays (Papillion) and Kevin Thomsen (Elkhorn). But Grove was the only one to see action in the opener against Nevada.

And that was rare. Nearly every walk-on redshirts, expects it, in fact.

Grove expected to redshirt, too. But he played well enough in training camp — defensive coordinator and linebackers coach Kevin Cosgrove called it "outstanding" — to earn a special-teams job.

Likely redshirt or not, however, Grove also expected to be part of the 105. The subject came up during discussions about walking on, following his senior season in high school. "That was a really big thing," he said. "I was going to be in camp because I really wanted to show the coaches what I had."

And training camp would give him an opportunity "to see if I really did have a shot," he said.

Had he not walked on at Nebraska, he could have gotten scholarship aid from a smaller school. Nebraska-Omaha and Nebraska-Kearney were among those interested.

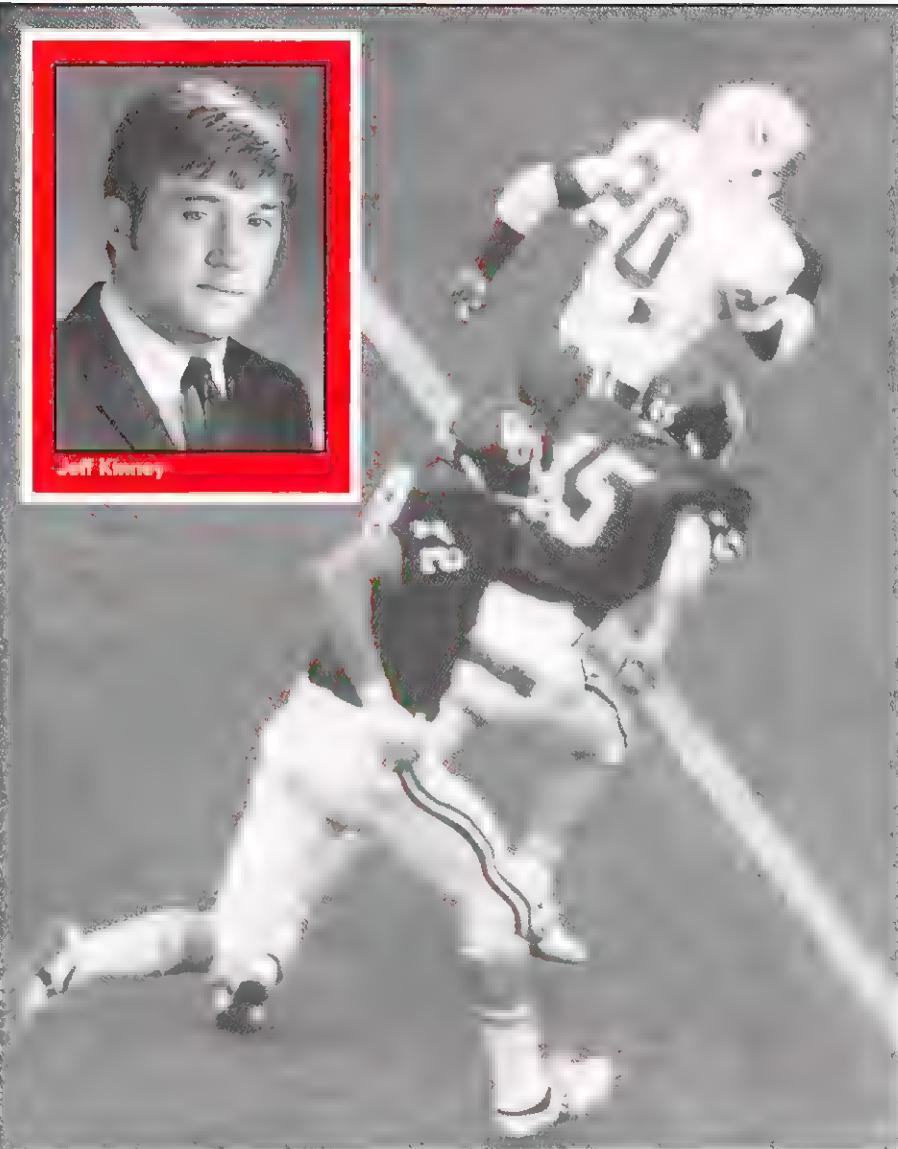
The decision was difficult, because of the money. He plans to major in pre-med. "But growing up in Nebraska, just the size of this program, it's something I want to be part of," said Grove.

### **Most embarrassing moment in training camp?**

"Coach (Kevin) Cosgrove giving me a big hit in a walk-through. I've gotta say that was the most embarrassing. I'm

# CHASING THE JET

# LISTS



Jeff Kinney

(Johnny Rodgers' career-receiving records, once seemingly unbreakable, are likely to fall in the not-too-distant future, under an assault facilitated by coach Bill Callahan's West Coast offense. This season, Huskers Illustrated takes a look at the all-time best receivers, as senior Terrence Nunn continues to climb on the all-time receptions list, topped by Rodgers.)

## JEFF KINNEY (1969-71) No. 35 6-2, 210 McCook, Neb.

It seemed an anomaly until Matt Davison came along and moved past Kinney into second-place on Nebraska's career-receptions list. Kinney was an All-America I-back and a first-round draft pick of the Kansas City Chiefs, not a receiver. The truth is, however, he began his Cornhusker varsity career as a wingback, a flanker in the spread offense to which Nebraska went in 1969. The former high school quarterback finished spring practice in 1969 as a back-up to Larry Frost. By season's end, Kinney was playing I-back because of injuries. But he remained a receiving threat, leading the team in receptions, rushing and scoring that season. He wasn't a great runner at first, he has said, because he had problems reading blocks. By late in the season, that had improved, as his subsequent success showed. He "arrived" as a ball carrier in his final regular-season game as a sophomore, according to a Lincoln sports writer, carrying 35 times for 127 yards and scoring three touchdowns, one on a pass reception, in a 44-14 victory at Oklahoma. Two years later, he again ran over the Sooners at Norman, rushing for 171 yards and four touchdowns in the Game of the Century. He finished as Nebraska's career-rushing leader and second in career catches, with 82. ■

### TOP 10 IN TOWN

(Highest-ranked visiting teams in Memorial Stadium)

#### No. 1

Yr.	Team	(NU rank)	Result
1978	Oklahoma	(No. 4)	17-14
1974	Oklahoma	(No. 6)	14-28
1955	Oklahoma		0-41

#### No. 2

2001	Oklahoma	(No. 3)	20-10
1994	Colorado	(No. 3)	24-7
1987	Oklahoma	(No. 1)	7-17
1948	Notre Dame		13-44

#### No. 3

1987	UCLA	(No. 2)	42-33
1986	Oklahoma	(No. 5)	17-20
1981	Penn State	(No. 15)	24-30
1973	Oklahoma	(No. 10)	0-27
1938	Pittsburgh		0-19

#### No. 4

1991	Washington	(No. 9)	21-36
1984	Oklahoma	(No. 1)	7-17
1977	Alabama		31-24
1967	Colorado		16-21
1953	Oklahoma		7-30
1949	Oklahoma		0-48

#### No. 5

1999	Kansas State	(No. 7)	41-15
1996	Colorado	(No. 4)	17-12
1969	USC		21-31
1967	Oklahoma		14-21
1960	Missouri		0-28
1936	Pittsburgh	(No. 6)	6-19

#### No. 6

1963	Oklahoma	(No. 10)	29-20
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#### No. 7

1977	Colorado	(No. 18)	33-15
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#### No. 8

1995	Kansas State	(No. 2)	49-25
1992	Colorado	(No. 8t)	52-7
1976	Oklahoma	(No. 10)	17-20

#### No. 9

1998	Washington	(No. 2)	55-7
1990	Colorado	(No. 3)	12-27
1984	Oklahoma St.	(No. 8)	17-3
1980	Oklahoma	(No. 4)	17-21

#### No. 10

None

### CALIFORNIANS FOR NEBRASKA

(Current Huskers who call California home)

Major Culbert, IB	Harbor City
Beau Davis, QB	Venice
Roy Helu, IB	Danville
Jacob Hickman, OL	Bakersfield
Menelik Holt, WR	San Diego
Sam Keller, QB	Danville
Zac Lee, QB	San Francisco
Marlon Lucky, IB	North Hollywood
Carl Nicks, OL	Salinas
Jordan Picou, OL	Rialto
Maurice Purify, WR	Eureka
Austin Stafford, LB	Hayward
Hunter Teafatiller, TE	Kingsburg
Rickey Thenarse, S	Los Angeles
Ethan Valburg, OL	Fullerton
Anthony West, CB	San Diego
Bryan Wilson, S	Granada Hills

### NEBRASKA VS USC

1969*	21-31	2006	10-28
1970	21-21	*At Memorial Stadium	

# Corner Help

**With three senior cornerbacks, NU is looking to add depth in 2008**

**By Rick Shaw**

**T**he 2007 Nebraska squad boasts four cornerbacks who have, at one time or other, been in the starting lineup. The NU staff has the luxury of enjoying good depth at a position that, just last year, was among the thinnest on the team.

Three of those four cornerbacks are seniors this season. Only current starter Armando Murillo will return



David Whitmore

Marc Anthony

in 2008. Nebraska will need to sign at least two cornerback prospects to letters of intent this February to replenish the ranks.

The Huskers got off to a great start in this quest last April when they landed the pledge of David Whitmore. The 6-foot-2, 190-pound cover corner from Memorial High School in Port Arthur, Texas, chose Nebraska over scholarship offers from

Missouri, Oklahoma State and Kansas State. Rated the No. 18 cornerback prospect in the country by Rivals.com, Whitmore will bring excellent size and good speed (4.5-second 40-yard dash) to the NU secondary.

Even with the commitment of Whitmore, the Nebraska coaches hope to add at least one more cornerback to this year's class, and they've scoured the entire country looking for the most qualified candidates.

Marc Anthony, a cornerback out of Chandler, Ariz., is scheduled to take an official visit to Lincoln on Sept. 14 to watch NU's game against Southern California. Rated as the No. 15 cornerback (four stars) by Rivals, Anthony said that the Huskers currently stand high atop his list of favorites.

"If I had to choose right now, I'd say that Cal, Nebraska and Michigan

## NEBRASKA COMMITMENTS FOR 2008

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	40	Hometown (School)
Will Compton	LB	6-2	214	4.5	Bonne Terre, Mo. (North County)
Sean Fisher	LB	6-5	210	4.6	Omaha, Neb. (Millard North)
Blaine Gabbert	QB	6-4	226	4.65	Ballwin, Mo. (Parkway West)
Bryce Givens	OL	6-6	257	5.1	Denver, Colo. (J.K. Mullen)
Jonas Gray	RB	5-10	213	4.44	Detroit, Mich. (Country Day)
Eric Harper	DE	6-4	220	4.62	Marrero La. (John Ehret)
Ricky Henry	OL	6-4	300	5.2	Omaha, Neb. (Burke/North Dakota State College of Science)
Tyson Hetzer	TE	6-7	265	4.75	Glendora, Calif. (Citrus CC)
Adrian Hilburn	WR	6-2	190	4.4	San Francisco, Calif. (City College of SF)
Dan Hoch	OL	6-6	295	5.21	Harlan, Iowa
Keelan Johnson	DB	6-0	195	4.5	Mesa, Ariz.
John Levorson	ATH	6-4	185	4.55	Crete, Neb.
Cameron Meredith	DE	6-4	222	4.6	Santa Ana, Calif. (Mater Dei)
Shaun Mohler	LB	6-3	225	4.6	Costa Mesa, Calif. (Orange Coast CC)
Collins Okafor	RB	6-1	210	4.54	Omaha, Neb. (Westside)
Darius Parish	DT	6-3	325	5.08	Wichita, Kan.
Doug Rippy	LB	6-2	218	4.6	Columbus, Ohio (McKinley)
Baker Steinkuhler	OL	6-6	290	4.88	Lincoln, Neb. (Southwest)
David Whitmore	DB	6-2	190	4.5	Port Arthur, Texas (Memorial)
Josh Williams	DE	6-4	220	4.8	Denton, Texas (Ryan)
D.J. Woods	WR	6-0	169	4.35	Strongsville, Ohio

For more daily recruiting information, visit [HuskersIllustrated.com](http://HuskersIllustrated.com), a member of the Rivals.com network.

are my top choices, but I still like some others, too," Anthony said.

"Nebraska is a big-time program. They were a real good championship team in the 90's. They go to bowl games every year and know how to win. Plus, they had like five or six Arizona commits last year, so I wouldn't be the only one out there. I also enjoy my relationship with Coach (Bill) Busch. He's a great guy."

Anthony was named second-team all-region and honorable mention all-state as a junior after tallying 58 tackles and five interceptions from his position in the Chandler secondary. He holds double-digit Division I scholarship offers, including offers from seven schools in the Pac-10.

The Huskers currently trail both the Bears and Wolverines for Anthony's services. NU could make up some ground when the Arizona athlete visits Lincoln later this month.

Another cornerback who will be making his way to Nebraska for the Sept. 14 weekend is Adrian Bushell. The 5-11, 180-pound speedster (4.4) from DeSoto, Texas, coincidentally, also lists Nebraska among his top three college choices.

"It's still Nebraska, Florida and Michigan in the lead," Bushell said. "Those three schools are just really standing out right now. I want to take a look at all three on campus during official visits.

"Nebraska is really a thing where I could be playing early there because they're kind of thin at corner. They told me that I can get in and contribute early if I play well."

Rated the No. 21 prospect in Texas (four stars) by Rivals, Bushell already holds more than 20 scholarship offers from Division I programs. He's also a standout on the track, finishing sixth in the state last spring in the 110-meter hurdles.

Yet a third cornerback prospect who will be in attendance to watch Nebraska's game against USC is Leonard Johnson of Largo, Fla. The 5-10, 177-pound athlete will visit Lincoln after visiting Iowa State the

## RECRUITING NOTES

# Kickers Draw NU Attention

By Sean Stevens

**O**ne week into the 2007 season, Nebraska's kicking situation looks like it is in good hands with true freshman Adi Kunalic knocking in long field goals and booming kickoffs through the end zone. Redshirt freshman Alex Henery also looks strong on extra points. One would expect him to show the same consistency on short field goals.

With both players having three years of eligibility remaining after the 2007 season, fans might wonder why Nebraska would focus on kickers in the 2008 recruiting class. When a prospect in your home state is among the top players in the country at the position, the coaches would be remiss if they didn't at least take a look at that player.

As a junior, Brett Maher (6-foot, 170 pounds) was named first-team all-district, first-team All-Nebraska by the Omaha World-Herald and first-team Class C-1 by the Lincoln Journal Star, while playing for Utica Centennial. His father took a job as the superintendent at Class A Kearney, so a transfer was in order. Maher was expected to battle with 2006 Class A all-state kicker Josh Gable, however, Gable decided to focus on soccer, and Maher has taken the job by storm.

Showing the type of athleticism evident in past Husker kickers such as Kris Brown and Josh Brown, Maher began his career at Kearney by catching a 90-yard touchdown pass and also kicking a 47-yard field goal and three PATs in the Bearcats' 30-0 win over Norfolk.

Maher is hearing from programs such as Nebraska, Iowa, LSU, Iowa State, Kansas, Kansas State, Oklahoma and Washington State. Despite being well aware of Kunalic's prowess, Maher remains interested in a future as a Husker.

"I think they're going to wait and see what happens with a kicker this year, since they just scholarshiped (Kunalic)," he said. "I think if they do anything, it would be to grayshirt someone would be my guess. (Tight ends coach) Joe Rudolph has kind of been the one contacting me and stuff."

• Junior Dan Titchener currently holds the punting job at Nebraska. With only one year remaining after this season, punter is a bit more of a priority than place-kicker in 2008 recruiting.

Kyle Martens (6-6, 185) of Spearfish, S.D., is high on Nebraska's priority list. He is ranked by nationally renowned kicking instructor Chris Sailer as the No. 7 punter nationally.

Sailer's breakdown of Martens said, "Kyle has talent. He is big and strong and has not yet reached his full potential. He has the chance to be one of the very best in his class. (He is) one to watch in 2007."

Colleges have taken notice, as Martens has been hearing from Nebraska, LSU, Oklahoma, Toledo, and some lower division schools.

"Nebraska has been the main school I have been looking at, though," said Martens. "(Nebraska special teams coach Bill) Busch said he wants to see what I do in my senior year."

Martens holds a personal best punt of 78 yards, 65 yards of which was covered in the air, and regularly charts more than four seconds hang time. ■



Adrian Bushell



Brett Maher



Kyle Martens

previous weekend. According to Johnson, his decision may come down to the Huskers and Cyclones.

"I'm scheduled to visit Iowa State on Sept. 7, and I'm going to Nebraska on Sept. 14," Johnson said. "Those are the only ones I have set right now."

"With Nebraska, I know that the fan base there is crazy. They've sold out every game there since 1963, or something like that. I'm also impressed with the academics for their athletes. It's a bigger school, which would probably provide me a better chance of playing at the next level. I know that (Nebraska) has 21 or 22 commits already, so I'd probably have to make a decision fast to be part of their class."

Johnson, who also holds offers from West Virginia, Iowa, Illinois, Oklahoma State and others, is rated a three-star prospect by Rivals. He earned first-team all-conference honors as an "athlete" in 2006. As Largo's starting quarterback, he passed for more than 900 yards and 13 touchdowns and ran for an additional 800 yards and nine scores. He also returned three punts for touchdowns, including a longest return of 80 yards.



Leonard Johnson



Jon Lejiste

"I had six interceptions from my corner position as a freshman and five as a sophomore," Johnson said. "Last season, I didn't play defense quite as much, but, despite that, most colleges like me as a cornerback/return specialist. To tell you the truth, I think that position (cornerback) will take me to the next level."

Jon Lejiste is another talented cornerback from Florida, giving the Cornhuskers a long, hard look. The 6-0, 176-pounder from Atlantic Community High School in Delray Beach earned first-team all-county honors as a safety in 2006, but most schools are recruiting him as a cornerback.

"They like my versatility," Lejiste

said. "I'll play wherever they need me."

With 4.44-second speed in the 40 and a 35-inch vertical leap, Lejiste has the speed and athleticism to be a difference-maker. NU is one of 13 schools that have offered, joining Pittsburgh, Rutgers, Wisconsin, Illinois, Virginia and others.

"I talk to Nebraska's defensive back's coach (Phil) Elmassian," Lejiste said. "He's a great guy. Nebraska is a great program and a great school. I hope to visit there sometime before it's all said and done."

Lejiste, rated the No. 88 prospect in Florida (four stars), only has one official visit scheduled, thus far. He's slated to visit Madison, Wisc., on Sept. 14.

Nebraska already has one top-notch cornerback pledge in its 2008 class and would like to add another before signing day in February. It's all a matter of ensuring that it has plenty of talent and depth, especially after they say goodbye to three seniors at the end of this season. ■

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Senior wide receiver Maurice Purify (16) had three catches for 30 yards, including a 9-yard reception in the third quarter on the play before Marlon Lucky's touchdown run that put Nebraska ahead 20-17. (Photo by Scott Brumley)

**Nebraska 20**  
**Wake Forest 17**

# Right Place, Rig

**Defense comes up  
big to turn away  
Demon Deacons**

**By Mike Babcock  
Photos: Scott Bruhn**

**S**imply put, Zack Bowman was in "the right place at the right time," Nebraska coach Bill Callahan said following a 20-17 victory against Wake Forest.

In general, the right place was his own end zone, late in the fourth quarter.

More specifically, the right place was in front of a Brett Hedges pass.

Bowman intercepted the pass, which was intended for wide receiver Chip Brinkman, to end a threat that had begun two plays earlier at the Nebraska 10-yard line.

The Demon Deacons had lined up third-and-goal from there.

After Micah Andrews carried for 6 yards on first down, Wake Forest was in position to at least tie the game with a short field goal, or take the lead if it could do something on the next two downs.

But Cornhusker defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh came up big on second down, dropping Andrews for a 6-yard loss. And Bowman followed with his right-place-at-the-right-time pick.

"It was just a great play," said Callahan.

Wake Forest was in such a position after what also was ruled an interception on a misplay by Nebraska quarterback Sam Keller, who claimed he had fumbled trying to pull the ball back because his receivers were covered. Whatever the reality, interception or fumble, he lost it.

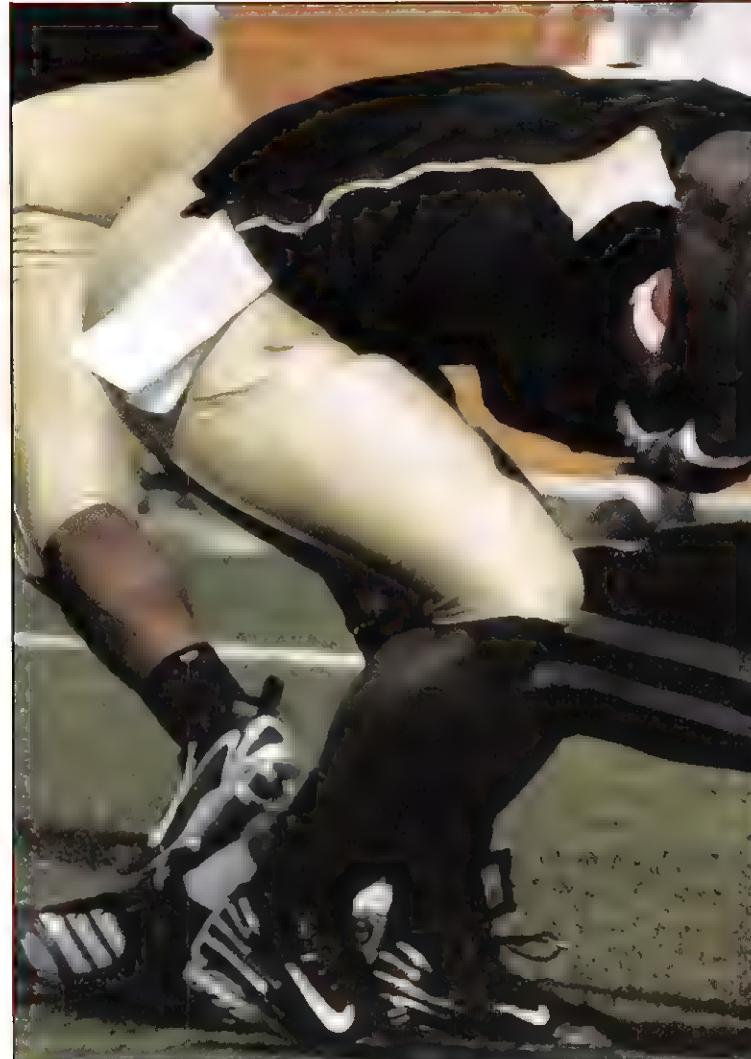
The Blackshirts had his back, however, just as they did in the second quarter, after a fumbled snap gave Wake Forest possession at the Nebraska 38-yard line.

By run, pass and a personal foul, the Demon Deacons advanced as far as the Nebraska 2-yard line, first and goal, but had to settle for a 25-yard field goal to tie the score at 3, after three consecutive tackles for loss, in order, by Suh, defensive end Zach Potter and linebacker Bo Ruud.

On its next possession of the second quarter, when it took a 10-7 lead, Wake Forest needed three downs from the 1-yard line to push the ball across the goal line, and then just barely.

Hedges scored, after being stopped twice by Shukree

## TURNING POINT



Nebraska defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh takes down Wake Forest tailback Micah Andrews for a loss of 6 yards on the play before Zack Bowman's interception in the end zone.

Barfield.

The Cornhuskers' goal line defense was "huge today," Suh said.

"We definitely came through strong and did our job."

Despite the miscues — he also threw a third-quarter interception on which Wake Forest couldn't capitalize — Keller "played, I thought, well," said Callahan.

That was best illustrated at the end of the first half, when he ran the 2-minute drill to near perfection, directing an 11-play, 80-yard touchdown drive with 16 seconds to spare.

All of the plays were passes, eight of them complete. The last covered 25 yards, perfectly thrown, to tight end Sean Hill, who caught it in stride, despite close coverage, in the end zone.

"He (Keller) made some outstanding plays, under duress . . . under the gun," Callahan said. "I think that was

# Right Time



huge. It really lifted the team up going into the half. We felt we had them out of condition there. I thought they were dragging. I thought we had a chance to come out in the third quarter and put them away. But give them credit. Their offense came out at the beginning of the third quarter and drove the ball 90 yards and got back on the board. It deflated us a little bit, but we came right back and responded."

Bowman was among many Cornhuskers about whom that could have been said.

Like Keller's 2-minute drive, Bowman's interception "was huge," said Callahan. "There was a senior co-captain, an experienced player, playing his goal line coverage responsibilities."

Callahan transitioned into the coaching terminology of the play, "seven coverage," "picket fence," "outside corner, high-low in the end zone," "route distribution."

What it all meant was: right place, right time. Enough said. ■

## REPORT CARD

### RUSHING OFFENSE

After rushing for 413 yards against Nevada, the Cornhuskers managed only 115 rushing yards, and more significantly, just 3.4 yards per carry. Not to worry. "I knew it was going to be different," said junior I-back Marlon Lucky, who carried the load again. "I knew they were going to try to stop the run. That's what everybody's going to be doing from now on, stop the run." \*\*\*

### PASSING OFFENSE

Quarterback Sam Keller completed 24-of-41 passes for 258 yards and a touchdown, with two interceptions and a lost fumble. But he's still new to the system and still shaking off the rust after sitting out last season following his transfer from Arizona State. His direction of the 2-minute offense and touchdown pass to tight end Sean Hill provided a glimpse of what he's capable of doing. \*\*\*

### RUSHING DEFENSE

Wake Forest rushed for 236 yards and averaged 4.5 yards carry, an average inflated by end-around plays utilizing wide receivers Kenny Moore and Kevin Marion. Moore carried eight times for 116 yards and a touchdown. "We're still confident in our run defense," said Cornhusker linebacker Bo Ruud. "It wasn't normal stuff that got us. That's not stuff many teams do as well as Wake Forest." \*\*\*

### PASSING DEFENSE

You be the judge. Wake Forest passed for 366 yards in a 38-28 loss at Boston College, completing 45-of-60, with four interceptions. The Demon Deacons were much less effective against Nebraska, in part because quarterback Riley Skinner was sidelined by injury. \*\*\*

### SPECIAL TEAMS

Dan Titchener's punting was a positive. But for the second week in a row, a Cornhusker punt returner collided with a teammate. Cortney Grixby has established himself on kickoff returns. \*\*\*

## NUMBERS

22

How's this for coincidence? Nebraska's first points came on a 22-yard field goal by redshirted freshman walk-on Alex Henery. The Cornhuskers' next three points came on another Henery field goal, also from 22 yards. And their final points came on I-back Marlon Lucky's 22-yard touchdown run (followed by a Henery extra-point kick) with 8:13 remaining in the third quarter. Let's just say, deuces wild.

# NEBRASKA-WAKE FOREST NOTES

## THAT'S FOOTBALL

Wake Forest's final play from scrimmage was a pass from Brett Hodges intended for Kenny Moore, the Demon Deacon's "go-to guy," according to coach Jim Grobe. Cornhusker cornerback Cortney Grixby had Moore covered, too closely if Grobe was to be believed.

"We felt like he was interfered with, but that's their call," Grobe said of the officials, who were from the Big 12 Conference. "They get paid to make those calls, and we get paid to coach football."

Moore said he thought Grixby was early, but "it was a great play."

Grixby thought otherwise about his being early. "It was tight coverage," he said. "It can go either way. That's about playing defense. I was just on his back hip. It's football."

## NO INTERCEPTION

On the previous play, an interception by Nebraska safety Ben Eisenhart was overturned on replay. Grixby tipped the ball, and "I thought I was going to get my hands on it as far as holding onto it," he said. "But it came a little fast. We thought 'Eisy' had it, but it could go either way."

"'Eisy' didn't even know if he got it."

## NEXT UP NO. 1

Top-ranked USC comes to Memorial Stadium on Saturday, for a nationally televised game on ABC. "We're going to enjoy this victory for a little bit, then we'll jump on USC tomorrow afternoon," coach Bill Callahan said. "But we're extremely excited to be playing them."

## BIG RED RESILIENCY

Wake Forest took the kickoff to start the second half and drove 87 yards on nine plays to a touchdown for a 17-13 lead. But Nebraska responded with an eight-play, 74-yard touchdown drive begun with a 30-yard pass from Sam Keller to Terrence Nunn and capped by I-back Marlon Lucky's 22-yard run.

"Going into the game, we talked about the momentum and how it was going to change and how it was going to swing. We just really preached to our players to stay in there, keep fighting, keep swinging and keep punching because that's the main thing, how you respond to adverse conditions on the road," said Callahan. "Some of the conditions that you're going to get into are not always going to be favorable."

## CATCHING UP

Nunn caught six passes for 83 yards. The six catches were the second-highest total of his career. He caught eight passes against Iowa State in 2005. The senior from Houston has caught at least one pass in 29 consecutive games and now has 109 career receptions for 1,429 yards.

Junior Nate Swift caught five passes for 45 yards. He moved up to a tie for fifth place on the Cornhuskers' career-receptions list with 74.

Senior tight end Sean Hill made his first career catch, good for 25 yards and a touchdown.

## WELCOME BACK

Senior wide receiver Maurice Purify and junior tight end Hunter Teafatiller saw their first action of the season after sitting out the opening game because of suspensions. They caught three passes.

Purify also missed the summer conditioning program because of suspension.

"I thought that he played where I expected him to play. It's hard to come back and be where you're at when you finish the season in January. But by and large, it's going to take a little time. It'll be a process for him to get back to full speed. I don't know anybody who just comes back and all of a sudden is at that caliber of where they were when they left off," Callahan said.

"He's made some strides. It was fun to watch him play. He made some great plays."

## SHORT AND LONG OF IT

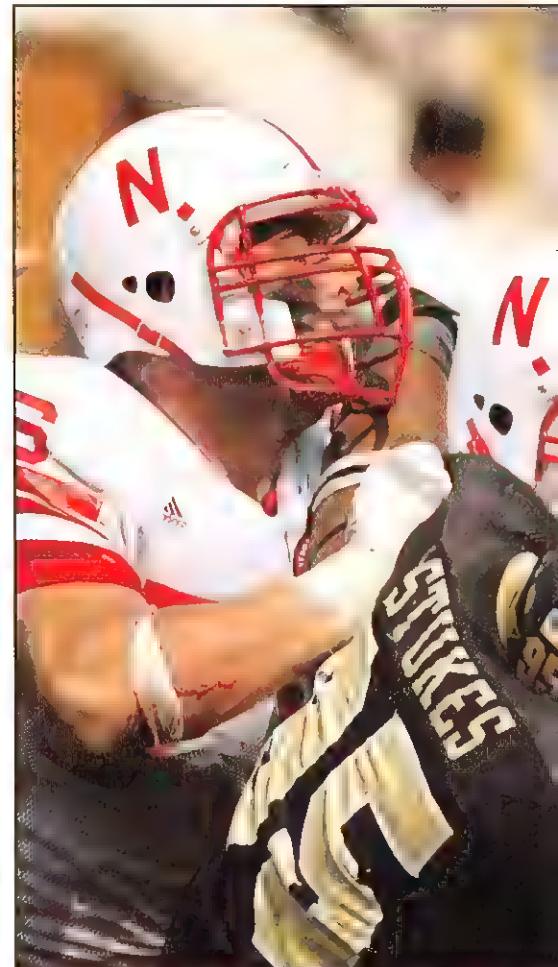
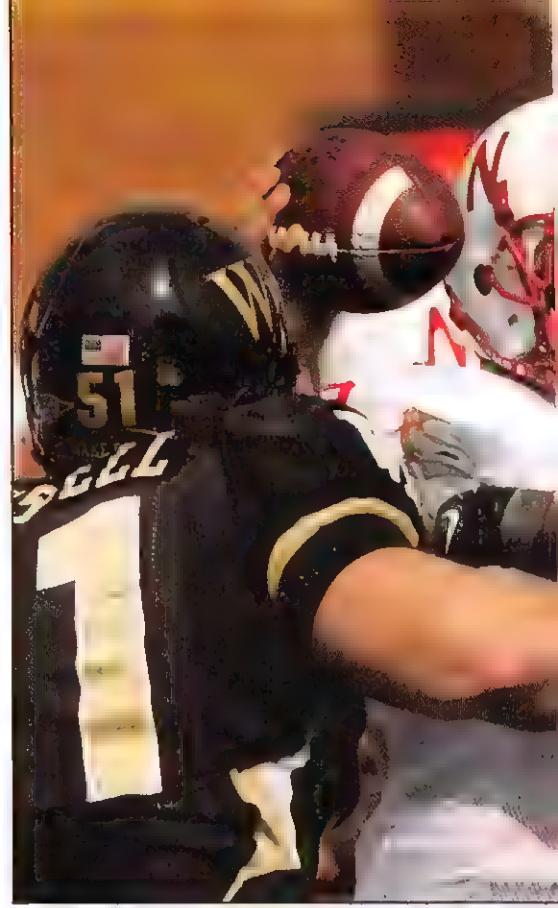
True freshman Adi Kunalic kicked a 46-yard field goal against Nevada. Redshirted freshman Alex Henery got the call against Wake Forest, kicking a pair of 22-yard field goals. Kunalic again handled kickoffs, with one touchback in five attempts.

## TRAVEL ROSTER

Nebraska's 76-player travel roster included two freshmen who didn't see action in the opener, and who didn't see action against Wake Forest: offensive lineman Jaivorio Burkes and linebacker Latravis Washington.

## FOURTH CAPTAIN

Junior wide receiver Todd Peterson joined senior co-captains Bo Ruud, Brett Byford and Zack Bowman for the coin toss. ■



The football comes loose as Nebraska quarterback Sam ball was batted around (bottom), and officials ruled an i way through the fourth quarter.



Keller (9, top) is hit by Wake Forest's John Russell (51) and Zach Stukes (95). The interception by Russell, giving the Demon Deacons possession at the NU 10 mid-

## Who Stood Out?

### OFFENSE

After rushing for 233 yards, totaling 266 all-purpose yards and scoring four touchdowns against Nevada, junior I-back Marlon Lucky rushed for 90 yards and a touchdown and caught four passes for 34 yards. He wasn't frustrated by the dramatically diminished rushing yardage, however.

"Oh no, because I'm an all-purpose back; that's what I am. I don't get too excited about 200 yards rushing. I like to catch the ball," said Lucky, who's "always been" that way.

He didn't have to persuade coach Bill Callahan of that.

"He already knew I could catch; he recruited me," Lucky said.

**DEFENSE**  
Senior cornerback Cortney Grixby sprained his right ankle late in the first half and was limited to playing nickel back in the second half. He came up big on Wake Forest's final possession, with two pass break-ups, the second on third-and-10 from the Demon Deacon 44-yard line.

The ball went through his hands and was nearly intercepted by safety Ben Eisenhart. The initial interception ruling was overturned on review, allowing a fourth-down pass on which Grixby blanketed the receiver Kevin Moore — the intended target for a fourth consecutive play.



Cortney Grixby

**SPECIAL TEAMS**  
Two weeks into the season, junior walk-on Dan Titchener has established himself as a candidate for the All-Big 12 punter. Titchener averaged 44.5 yards per punt against Nevada, and he was even a little better against Wake Forest, averaging 45 yards on seven punts, with a long of 51.

## INJURY REPORT

Safety Tierre Green was helped off the field with 11:42 remaining in the third quarter and didn't return. He was replaced by Ben Eisenhart, who played the rest of the way.

"Guys go down, you've got to know what you're doing," said Eisenhart, a senior from Culbertson, Neb. "Everybody stepped up. I've been waiting my whole life for that. It felt great."

Junior defensive tackle Ty Steinkuhler made the trip but didn't play after suffering an injury in the opener against Nevada. Senior tight end Josh Mueller didn't make the trip because of injury.

# GAME STATS

## SCORING

Sept. 8, 2007  
 Groves Stadium Winston-Salem, N.C.  
 Attendance 32,483

	1	2	3	4	F
Nebraska	3	10	7	0	20
Wake Forest	0	10	7	0	17

### First Quarter

	NU	WF
NU Henery 22-yard Field Goal 08:49	3	0

**Drive:** 8 plays 32 yds 2:53

### Second Quarter

	WF	WF
WF Swank 25-yard Field Goal 10:46	3	3

**Drive:** 12 plays 30 yds 5:35

	NU	WF
NU Henery 22-yard Field Goal 07:41	6	3

**Drive:** 9 plays 62 yds 3:05

	WF	WF
WF Hodges 1-yard Run (Swank Kick) 05:13	6	10

**Drive:** 7 plays 78 yds 2:28

	NU	WF
NU Hill Pass from Keller 25-yards (Henery Kick) 00:16	13	10

**Drive:** 11 plays 80 yds 1:46

### Third Quarter

	WF	WF
WF Moore 5-yard Run (Swank Kick) 10:52	13	17

**Drive:** 9 plays 87 yds 4:08

	NU	WF
NU Lucky 22-yard Run (Henery Kick) 08:13	20	17

**Drive:** 8 plays 74 yds 2:39

## TEAM STATS

	NU	WF
--	----	----

Total First Downs	21	18
-------------------	----	----

Rushing	7	11
---------	---	----

Passing	12	5
---------	----	---

Penalty	2	2
---------	---	---

Rushing Attempts	34	53
------------------	----	----

Yards Gained Rushing	125	257
----------------------	-----	-----

Yards Lost Rushing	10	21
--------------------	----	----

Net Yards Rushing	115	236
-------------------	-----	-----

Net Yards Passing	258	140
-------------------	-----	-----

Passes Attempted	41	24
------------------	----	----

Passes Completed	24	12
------------------	----	----

Had Intercepted	2	2
-----------------	---	---

Percent Completion	58.5%	50.0%
--------------------	-------	-------

Yards per Attempt	6.3	5.8
-------------------	-----	-----

Yards per Completion	10.8	11.7
----------------------	------	------

Total Offensive Plays	75	77
-----------------------	----	----

Total Net Yards	373	376
-----------------	-----	-----

Avg. Gain Per Play	5.0	4.9
--------------------	-----	-----

Fumbles: No-Lost	2-1	0-0
------------------	-----	-----

Penalties: No-Yards	5-26	6-51
---------------------	------	------

Punts: No-Yards	5-225	7-273
-----------------	-------	-------

Avg. Per Punt	45.0	39.0
---------------	------	------

Avg. Net Punt	42.2	39.0
---------------	------	------

Punt Returns: No-Yards	1-0	2-14
------------------------	-----	------

Kickoff Returns: No-Yards	4-98	4-89
---------------------------	------	------

Interception Returns: No-Yds	2-3	2-0
------------------------------	-----	-----

Fumble Returns: No-Yards	0-0	0-0
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Miscellaneous Yards	0	0
---------------------	---	---

Possession Time	27:58	32:02
-----------------	-------	-------

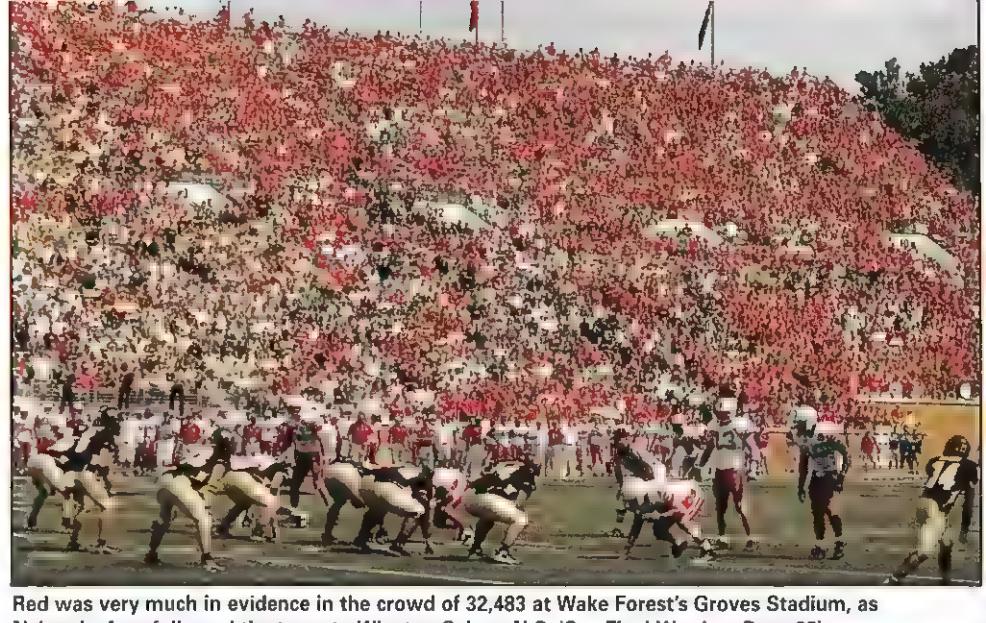
Third-Down Conversions	3-15	9-20
------------------------	------	------

Percentage	20.0%	45.0%
------------	-------	-------

Fourth-Down Conversions	2-3	1-2
-------------------------	-----	-----

Percentage	66.7%	50.0%
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Sacks By: No-Yards	1-3	0-0
--------------------	-----	-----



Red was very much in evidence in the crowd of 32,483 at Wake Forest's Groves Stadium, as Nebraska fans followed the team to Winston-Salem, N.C. (See Final Word on Page 38)

## INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

### NEBRASKA

#### RUSHING

No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg
24	92	2	90	3.8	1	22
6	28	0	28	4.7	0	18
2	5	4	1	0.5	0	0
Total	34	125	10	3.4	1	22

#### PASSING

Att	Comp	%	Int	Yds	TD	Lg
41	24	58.5	2	258	1	30
Total	41	24	58.5	2	258	1

#### RECEIVING

No	Yds	TD	Lg
6	83	0	30
5	45	0	14
4	34	0	15
3	30	0	12
Hill	1	25	1
Teafatiller	3	21	0
Hardy	2	20	0
Total	24	268	1

#### PUNT RETURNS

No	Yds	TD	Lg
1	0	0	0
Total	1	0	0

#### KICKOFF RETURNS

No	Yds	TD	Lg
4	98	0	31
Total	4	98	0

#### PUNTING

No	Avg	Lg	Bk	TB	FC	50+	In 20
7	39.0	54	0	2	2	1	2
Total	7	39.0	54	0	2	2	1

#### FIELD GOALS

Made	Att	Lg	Bkld
2	2	4	0
Total	2	2	4

#### DEFENSE

Solo	Ast	Tot	TFL	Sack	PD	FF	FR
Asanta	4	5	9	0-0	0-0	0	0
Bowman	4	3	7	0-0	0-0	0	0
Octavien	6	0	6	2-4	0-1	0	0
Dillard	5	1	6	0-0	0-0	0	0
Potter	4	1	5	2-5	1-3	0	0
McKeon	2	3	5	0-0	0-0	0	0
Ruud	3	1	4	1-1	0-0	0	0
Murillo	3	1	4	0-0	0-0	1	0
Eisenhart	2	2	4	0-0	0-0	0	0
Green	1	3	4	0-0	0-0	0	0
Turner	1	3	4	0-0	0-0	0	

## 2007 SEASON STATS

### RUSHING

	G	No Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G	
Lucky, Marlon	2	54	327	4	323	6.0	4	31	161.5
Castile, Quentin	2	24	106	0	105	4.4	2	18	53.0
Culbert, Major	2	5	35	0	35	7.0	1	17	17.5
Glenn, Cody	1	8	36	7	29	3.6	0	20	29.0
Hebu, Roy	1	8	28	0	28	4.3	0	13	26.0
Ganz, Joe	1	2	15	0	15	7.5	0	9	15.0
Keller, Sam	2	2	5	4	1	0.5	0	0	0.5
TEAM	2	3	0	7	-7	-2.3	0	0	-3.5

### PASSING

	G	Att	Comp	% Int	Yds	TD	Lg	YD/G	
Keller, Sam	2	66	38	57.6	3	451	2	30	225.5
Ganz, Joe	1	1	1	100.0	0	19	0	19	19.0

### RECEIVING

	G	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Nunn, Terrence	2	8	119	14.9	0	30	59.5
Swift, Nate	2	7	73	10.4	0	21	36.5
Lucky, Marlon	2	7	67	9.6	1	16	33.5
Hardy, Frantz	2	3	44	14.7	0	24	22.0
Purify, Maurice	1	3	30	10.0	0	12	30.0
Hill, Sean	2	1	25	25.0	0	25	12.5
McNeill, Mike	1	1	25	25.0	0	25	25.0
Teafatiller, Hunter	1	3	21	7.0	0	11	21.0
Erickson, Dan	2	1	19	19.0	0	19	9.5
Sand, Andy	2	1	15	15.0	0	15	7.5
Young, Drew	1	1	14	14.0	0	14	14.0
Peterson, Todd	2	1	8	8.0	0	8	4.0
Paul, Niles	1	1	6	6.0	0	6	6.0
Brooks, Chris	1	1	4	4.0	0	4	4.0

### PUNT RETURNS

	G	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Jones, Andre	2	1	24	24.0	0	24	12.0
Grixby, Cortney	2	3	4	1.3	0	6	2.0
Blue, Anthony	2	1	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
Nunn, Terrence	2	1	0	0.0	0	0	0.0

### KICKOFF RETURNS

	G	No	Yds	Avg	TD	Lg	Yd/G
Grixby, Cortney	2	6	164	27.3	0	42	82.0
Brandenburgh, Lance	2	1	7	7.0	0	7	3.5

### PUNTING

	G	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+ In 20	
Titchener, Dan	2	7	44.9	51	0	0	2	1	3

### FIELD GOALS

	G	Att	Made	Lg	Blkd
Henery, Alex	2	2	2	2	0
Kunalic, Adi	2	1	1	46	0

### DEFENSE LEADERS

	G	Tack	Ast	Tot	TFL Sack	PD	FF	FR
Asante, Larry	2	4	9	13	0-0	0-0	1	0
Octavien, Steve	2	9	2	11	3-14	0.5-4	1	0
McKeon, Corey	2	5	4	9	1-2	0-0	1	0
Bowman, Zackary	2	5	3	8	0-0	0-0	0	0
Dillard, Phillip	2	7	1	8	0-0	0-0	0	0
Murillo, Armando	2	4	4	8	0-0	0-0	2	0
Potter, Zach	2	6	1	7	3-6	1-3	0	0
Grixby, Cortney	2	5	1	6	1-1	0-0	2	0
Turner, Barry	2	2	4	6	0.5-5	0.5-6	0	0
Eisenhart, Ben	2	3	2	5	0-0	0-0	0	0
Green, Terrie	1	1	4	5	0-0	0-0	1	0
Ruud, Bo	2	4	1	5	2-2	0-0	0	0
Suh, Ndamukong	2	5	0	5	2-9	0-0	0	0
Brandenburgh, L.	2	3	1	4	0-0	0-0	0	0
Barfield, Shukree	2	3	0	3	0-0	0-0	0	0
Dixon, Kevin	2	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0	0

### TEAM STATISTICS

	NU	OPP
Total First Downs	56	27
Rushing	27	14
Passing	24	10
Penalty	5	3
Total Net Yards	998	561
Total Plays	171	128
Yards Per Play	5.8	4.4
Yards Per Game	499.0	280.5
Rushing Attempts-Yards	104-528	77-313
Yards Per Attempt	5.1	4.1
Yards Per Game	264.0	156.5
Pass Att.-Comp.-Int.	67-39-3	51-21-3
Passing Yards	470	248
Yards Per Completion	12.1	11.8
Yards Per Game	235.0	124.0
Punting: No.-Avg.	7-44.9	17-39.6
Fumbles-Lost	2-1	1-0
Penalties-Yards	13-91	18-137
Sacks By-Yds. Lost	2-12	0-0
Third-Down Conversions	10-30	10-33
Conversion Pct.	33.3	30.3
Fourth-Down Conversions	3-5	2-3
Conversion Pct.	60.0	66.7
Avg. Time Of Possession	34:18	25:42
Scoring	1st	2nd
Nebraska	10	24
Opponents	0	20
	31	7
	7	0
	0	0
	72	27

## 2007 RESULTS, SCHEDULE

1 Sept. 1	Nevada (0-2), W 52-10	1-0
2 Sept. 8	@Wake Forest (0-2), W 20-17	2-0
3 Sept. 15	USC (1-0), 7 p.m., ABC	
4 Sept. 22	Ball State (1-1), 11:30 a.m., FSN PPV	
5 Sept. 29	Iowa State (0-2), TBA	
6 Oct. 6	@Missouri (2-0), TBA	
7 Oct. 13	Oklahoma St. (1-1), TBA (Homecoming)	
8 Oct. 20	Texas A&M (2-0), TBA	
9 Oct. 27	@Texas (2-0), TBA	
10 Nov. 3	@Kansas (2-0), TBA	
11 Nov. 10	Kansas State (1-1), TBA	
12 Nov. 23	@Colorado (1-1), 11 a.m., ABC	
Dec. 1	Big 12 Championship at San Antonio, Texas, 7 p.m., ABC	

## SCOUTING REPORT

### GAME 3

#### Southern California

Sept. 15

Location: Los Angeles, Calif.

Enrollment: 33,000

2007 record: 1-0

Coach: Pete Carroll, 7th year

Series: USC leads 2-0-1



Saturday of the season after opening with a 38-10 victory over Idaho on Sept. 1 in Los Angeles.

Patrick Turner, the top returning receiver, sat out the opener after suffering a "stinger" in practice. He has 41 career receptions.

#### Trojan to Watch

Senior quarterback John David Booty, a top Heisman Trophy candidate, is in his second season as the USC starter. He entered the season with 3,764 career passing yards (10th on the school's all-time list) and 32 touchdown passes (eighth). He finished 21-of-32 for 206 yards and three touchdowns in the season-opener.

**The Trojans were idle the second**

### Big 12 At A Glance

Saturday, Sept. 8

Nebraska 20, Wake Forest 17

Missouri 38, Mississippi 25

Kansas State 34, San Jose State 14

Kansas 62, Southeastern Louisiana 0

Arizona State 33, Colorado 14

Northern Iowa 24, Iowa State 13

Oklahoma 51, Miami (Fla.) 13

Texas A&M 47, Fresno State 45, 3 OT

Texas 34, TCU 13

Texas Tech 45, UTEP 31

Oklahoma State 42, Florida Atlantic 6

Baylor 42, Rice 17

### On Deck

#### Ball State

Sept. 22

Location: Muncie, Ind.

Enrollment: 17,285

2007 record: 1-1

Coach: Brady Hoke, 5th year

Series: First meeting



11:30 a.m., FSN Pay-Per-View  
Memorial Stadium, Lincoln, Neb.

# THE PAUL FELL PREDICTION

## TENTATIVE 2-DEEPS

### NEBRASKA Offense

WR	12	Nate Swift*
WR	13	Mauricio Pinto
WR	14	Carl Nicklas
WR	15	Mike Smith
WR	16	Andy Chopek
WR	17	Jordan Picou
WR	18	Brett Byford
WR	19	Jacob Hickman
WR	20	Matt Slusser
WR	21	Mike Hunt
WR	22	Clyde Morris
WR	23	Billy Jones
WR	24	Pat Phillips
WR	25	Josh Mueller
WR	26	Terrence Nunn
WR	27	Francis Hardy
WR	28	Sam Koller
WR	29	Tom Ganz
WR	30	Andy Sand
WR	31	Thomas Lawlor
WR	32	Marion Lucky*
WR	33	Quentin Carter
WR	34	Kai Konakal

### NEBRASKA Defense

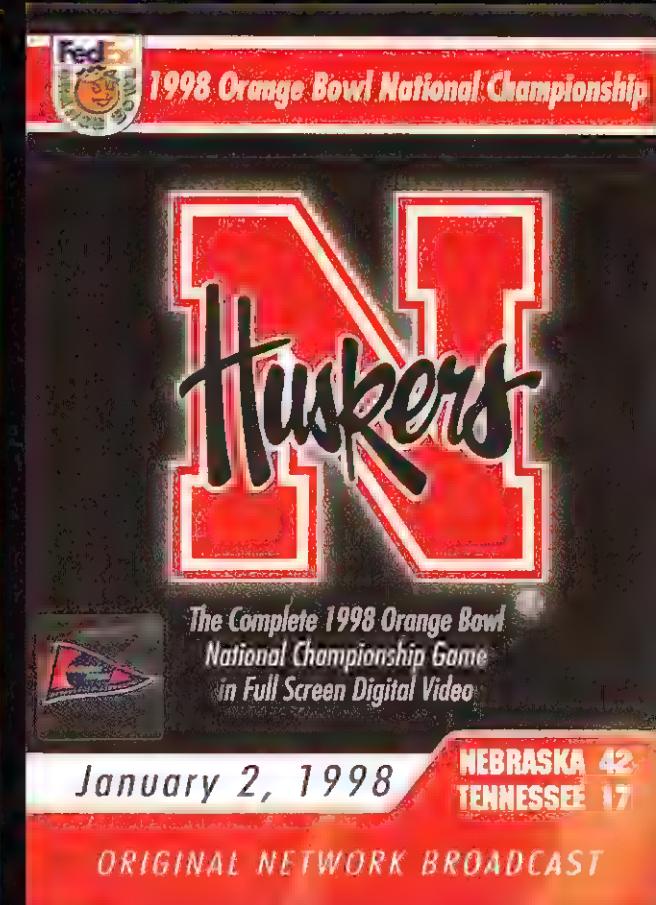
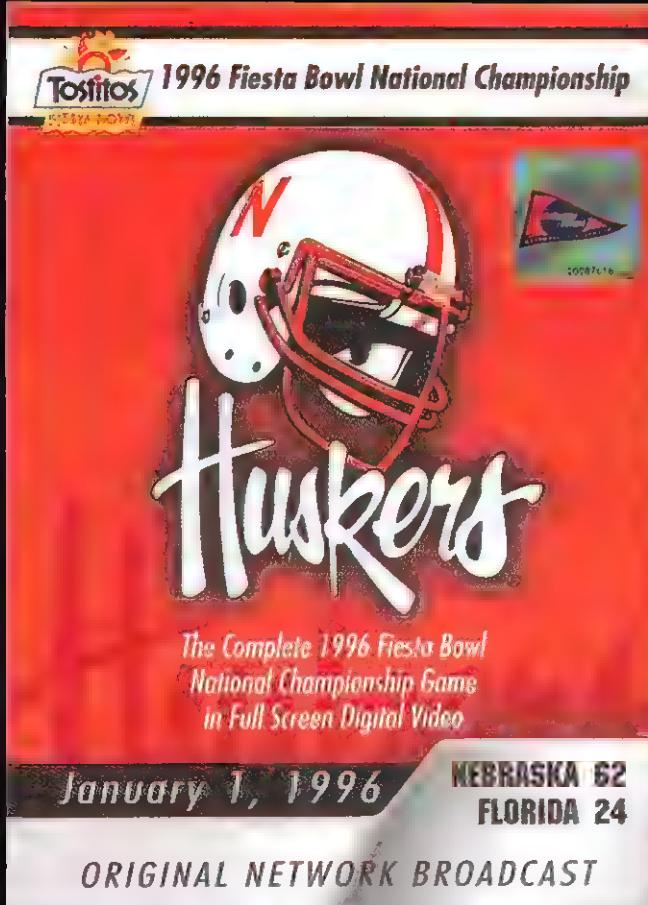
DE	09	Berry Turner
DE	10	Clayton Blowers
DE	11	Nalemukong Sub
DE	12	Shukru Barfield
DE	13	W. Steinkuhler
DE	14	Kevin Dixon
DE	15	Zach Posen
DE	16	Pierre Allen
DE	17	Bo Ruder
DE	18	Blake Lawrence
DE	19	Corey McKeon
DE	20	Philip Dillard
DE	21	Steve Octavien
DE	22	Dance Brandenburg
DE	23	Armando Murillo
DE	24	David Joyner
DE	25	Tarrel Green
DE	26	Alton Thomas
DE	27	Larry Adams
DE	28	Bryan Wilcox
DE	29	Cortney Grimes
DE	30	Zack Botteman
DE	31	Dan Tschirner

### USC Offense

QB	11	Samuel Baker
QB	12	Samuel Baker
QB	13	Samuel Baker
QB	14	Samuel Baker
QB	15	Samuel Baker
QB	16	Samuel Baker
QB	17	Samuel Baker
QB	18	Samuel Baker
QB	19	Samuel Baker
QB	20	Samuel Baker
QB	21	Samuel Baker
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QB	156	Samuel Baker
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# A Different

***Junior Schwartz has added responsibility with switch to libero***

**By Bob Hamar**

**R**achel Schwartz doesn't mind showing off her "girlie" national championship ring.

She wears it on the finger women often reserve for their wedding ring. Of course Schwartz, a junior libero for the Nebraska volleyball team, isn't married yet—at least not in the traditional sense of the word.

"I wear my ring on this finger because for the next two seasons, I'm married to volleyball," Schwartz joked recently after showing off the national championship ring.

Schwartz, a former Lincoln East standout, earned her ring as a defensive specialist last season. Her role this year has changed dramatically, although most people probably wouldn't realize it.

Schwartz got her first action as a starting libero to open the season in August. A libero, like a defensive specialist, plays only in the back row, but a libero's role is much more extensive.

As a libero, Schwartz plays 5 1/2 of the six rotations. She only comes out when middle blocker Tracy Stalls goes back to serve. As a defensive specialist, she played just three of the six rotations. That means she gets a lot more court time this year than a year ago.

But there's much more to it than just playing time.

"It's actually a different role,"

Junior Rachel Schwartz, who was Nebraska's defensive and serving specialist in 2006, won the starting libero job in fall camp.

Schwartz said. "The mentality you have to have is a lot different than a defensive specialist. It's not as evident. People think you're doing defense all the time so it doesn't change a lot.

"The mentality is a lot different. There's a lot more responsibility being a libero than a defensive specialist."

As a libero, Schwartz has to direct her teammates and make sure they are all in the right position and in the right defense. That's something she never had to do as a defensive specialist.

"There's a lot more to the position than what you see on the court," Schwartz said. "The little things are what is going to separate a good libero from a great libero."

Schwartz is hoping to develop into a great libero. She got to watch one of the best around a year ago when Dani Busboom played that position for the Huskers.

Busboom's background helped her do things Schwartz is still trying to learn. Busboom played setter for three years at Nebraska before moving to libero for her senior season.

"Dani was a setter obviously the past few years, so for her it was really good," Schwartz said. "As a libero, she could set and set in system, set



quick. That was really cool. That's something I knew I had to get better at so I could help the team that much more."

Nebraska coach John Cook is helping Schwartz work on the flat-footed

# inent Role



kind of scary."

It's obvious that Schwartz watched Busboom and tried to learn from her. Some fans might focus on the big hitters up front, but the Huskers might not have won that national title without Busboom's contributions both on the court and off.

"Dani was a very, very good leader," Schwartz said. "Watching her and how she handled herself on the court, she brought trust to the team. People knew she was going to get it done for them. That was the biggest thing I learned from her."

There are some things, though, that Schwartz may do better than Busboom ever did. She may not be able to set like Busboom, but her defensive fundamentals may well be better.

"Dani is such a great athlete," Cook said. "Rachel, I think, is more technically sound. Dani, we kind of turned her loose. You don't want to pull her back too much."

"Rachel is more technically trained. She plays in our system and understands that. Testing-wise, she is in the top five in a couple of our tests, so she is also a good athlete. Rachel plays in a more disciplined manner."

Schwartz began her experience as a libero in the season-opening AVCA Showcase at the Qwest Center in Omaha. In the second match of the season against No. 5 UCLA, Schwartz came up with a career-high 16 digs.

Cook said there were highs and lows to Schwartz' play early in the season.

"It's just her personality," Cook said. "She did some good things, but then she broke down a little bit. It's a different role when you're out there all the time as opposed to when you're out there three rotations."

It's all just a learning experience for Schwartz.

"Coach has me watching film," she said. "I watched UCLA and Coach

told me to look at my balance, which is a big thing for me. Right now, I'm trying to learn so the next game I can do that much better." ■

**Bob Hamar** covers the Nebraska volleyball team for the Grand Island (Neb.) Independent. He can be reached at [bob.hamar@theindependent.com](mailto:bob.hamar@theindependent.com)

## RESULTS, SCHEDULE

### AVCA Showcase At Qwest Center Omaha

Aug. 24	vs. Tennessee	W 3-0
Aug. 25	vs. UCLA	W 3-1

### Holiday Inn Classic

#### NU Coliseum/Qwest Center Omaha

Aug. 31	vs. Creighton (NU)	W 3-0
Sept. 2	vs. Penn St. (Omaha)	W 3-0
Sept. 3	vs. Cal Poly (NU)	W 3-0

### Ameritas Players Challenge NU Coliseum

Sept. 7	vs. Duke	7 p.m.
Sept. 8	vs. New Mexico St. or Louisville	4:30/7 p.m.

(Home matches at NU Coliseum, unless noted)

Sept. 12	Texas	7 p.m.
Sept. 15	@Texas Tech	TBA
Sept. 22	Texas A&M	TBA
Sept. 26	@Kansas	7 p.m.
Sept. 29	Baylor	TBA
Oct. 3	Kansas State	7 p.m.
Oct. 6	@Colorado	7:30 p.m.
Oct. 10	Iowa State	7 p.m.
Oct. 13	@Oklahoma	TBA
Oct. 17	@Missouri	6:30 p.m.
Oct. 20	Kansas	TBA
Oct. 21	Hawaii (Devaney)	5 p.m.
Oct. 24	@Texas	6:30 p.m.
Oct. 31	Missouri	7 p.m.
Nov. 3	@Kansas State	7 p.m.
Nov. 7	Colorado	7 p.m.
Nov. 11	@Iowa State	3 p.m.
Nov. 14	@Texas A&M	6:30 p.m.
Nov. 17	Oklahoma	7 p.m.
Nov. 21	@Baylor	6:30 p.m.
Nov. 24	Texas Tech	7 p.m.

### Nov. 29-Dec. 2 NCAA First/Second Rounds At Campus Sites

### Dec. 7-8 NCAA Regionals At Campus Sites

### Dec. 13-15 NCAA Final Four At Sacramento, Calif.

dump that Busboom used with great success a year ago to catch opposing defenses off guard.

"I worked on it this summer," Schwartz said. "He tried it with me last year in the spring, and it was

# Extra Work Paying Off



Kyle Custer is expected to move into a much larger role for the Huskers in his junior season.

***Nebraska junior getting to where he wants to be***

**By KATELYN KERKHOVE**

ike many Nebraska athletes, junior Kyle Custer hails from a small town in western Nebraska.

The cross country runner from Cambridge grew up a Cornhusker and dreamed of officially becoming one. But it wasn't until his senior year in high school that the dream became a reality. Recruited by several NCAA Division II schools in the state, Custer said the decision to come to Nebraska was a fairly easy one.

"Everyone wants to be a Husker," he said.

Now, three years into his running career at Nebraska, he's finally understanding that not only is the Husker cross country team right for him, but he is perfect for Nebraska. "I think part of the thing with him is it's a little bit of trouble for him to believe at times that he should be running at this level," Nebraska coach Jay Dirksen said. "I think his confidence, now, is starting to get to where it needs to be. When you see where you have to be and where you are at, the difference is sometimes overwhelming."

Entering his freshman year, the level of training, competition and intensity were all new to Custer. He was coming off of an extremely successful senior track season in high school in which he captured four class D gold medals at the state meet. According to recorded statistics, Custer is the only person to have earned as many first-place finishes in one state meet.

He soon found out he wasn't the only state champion on his new team, however.

"The competition has gone up, of course, and you're seeing a lot of people you don't know," Custer said of his transition into college running. "But when things come at you so fast, you're going to learn a lot, too. Your learning curve is going to be a lot higher. For someone like me, who didn't know a lot coming in, I'm going to pick up a lot more as I go along because there is just so much

around me."

Adapting as quickly as he could, Custer built up his weekly mileage. Today, he is running double the number of miles he did in high school, nearly 80 a week.

And it seems to be paying off.

Hampered by a stress fracture his freshman track season, Custer bounced back last year to take first place at the Creighton/UNO Classic at the beginning of the year. He competed in all seven meets during his sophomore year and finished as one of Nebraska's top three in five competitions.

This year, Dirksen said Custer will be a valuable asset to the Huskers, who are trying to improve on a somewhat disappointing 2006 campaign.

"I think he's going to be one of our top five guys, but beyond that I don't know," Dirksen said. "I just know he's vastly improved from a year ago."

Most of this improvement comes from Custer's ability to maximize training, Dirksen said. Not only has he increased his endurance and strength, but his form has improved as well.

In a recent 5,000-meter trial run, Dirksen was more than content with Custer's performance. "He's had the ability to handle a pretty good amount of training, and you could really see it (in the trial run)," Dirksen said. "He looked really pretty good. I wasn't really surprised; I was just happy to see the improvement he has made. It was only 5,000 meters, but it was hot — a terrible day to run. But he looked very strong and in control. Physically, the way he was running was as good as I've seen it."

For Custer, entering this year is about training strategy. Maturing as a runner, he said, he has a better handle on

how to prepare for the season as well as how to deal with adding in the competition element.

"I'm probably not in as good of shape as I was last year, but I'm thinking I'm going to improve more during the season this year than I did last year," he said. "Last year, I felt like I hit a plateau, and I didn't get any better. I'm hoping this year I gradually improve."

As a growing leader on the squad and a needed producer for the Huskers to improve in the Big 12 Conference standings, Custer has warmed up to his spot on the roster. He now wears Nebraska red a little bit differently than when he first entered the program.

"I think now he's gotten to the point where he really feels he belongs here," Dirksen said. "He can run here, and he's done enough work to make the necessary improvements."

## WOMEN WIN

The Husker women's cross country team won the championship at the Creighton/UNO Classic in Omaha for the fourth time in the past five seasons, taking the top three spots and five of the top 10. Lara Crofford, a freshman, was the individual champion, followed by teammates Ari Goldstein, a junior, and Rachel Carrizales, a sophomore. The Husker men's team finished second among three at the meet, with freshman Todd Gulizia finishing second individually.

Many of Nebraska's runners were held out of the meet for training reasons as the teams prepare for the Woody Greeno/Nebraska Invitational in Lincoln on Sept. 15.

**The remaining schedule:** **Sept. 29** — Roy Griak Invitational at St. Paul, Minn.; **Oct. 13** — Chile Pepper Festival at Fayetteville, Ark. & NCAA Pre-Nationals at Terre Haute, Ind.; **Oct. 26** — Big 12 Championships at Lubbock, Texas; **Nov. 10** — NCAA Midwest Regional at Peoria, Ill.; **Nov. 19** — NCAA Championships at Terre Haute, Ind. ■

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# A Talk w

**Editor's Note:** In late August, the week before the start of university classes, Huskers Illustrated's Mike Babcock sat down with Doc Sadler to interview the coach a year after taking charge. This is the first of two parts from that interview.

**HI:** Did you encounter anything that you didn't expect during your first year on the job?

**Sadler:** The good thing is I truly still believe that all the things I hoped about Nebraska maybe exceeded my expectations a little bit in that I knew at one time there was tremendous support for basketball in the 80s or 90s, whenever that was, when they had some success.

We came up here, I guess it would have been in the early 80s, and I know that the people here really, really do want basketball. They want it to be successful. They want to have something to come and cheer about. So that part of it, probably as much as anything, has been good.

I truly believe that the administration and the school and everybody want to have success. So there's no question the support from administration, from the fans, that I think you've got to have in order to have a program, is in place. So that's good.

**HI:** How would you assess last season on the court, finishing 17-14, and what are the implications for this season?

**Sadler:** I was talking to Paul Velander about it yesterday. There's no question in my mind as a coach — and I don't know how anybody else feels — but we definitely reached our full potential.

There's nothing that I would do anything different. I mean, obvious-

## Q&A

with Coach  
Doc Sadler

**"I truly believe that the administration and the school and everybody want to have success. So there's no question the support from administration, from the fans, that I think you've got to have in order to have a program, is in place. So that's good."**

ly, you had to make some decisions at times that may have kept you from winning a couple of more games, but those were decisions that I thought if you're going to build a program, you

had to make

Obviously, the decision to dismiss Jamel White (for example). I made the decisions at the time realizing they may keep us from winning one or two

# with DOC



more games. But I feel really good about where we're at right now. Are we good enough? No. But do I think we've closed the gap? No question. I like the team we're going to have this

year. I think it's athletic enough to be able to help us compete. I think we've improved that. So I feel good about it, I really do.

I think the things you've got to

have are in place here, and I like the guys that we have on our team. I've said this before. One of the things I think I understood, but last season made me believe it even more is I know you've got to have talent. I do know that. But one of the things I learned was, character can get you through some things, too. And so not only do I think the talent athletically is better, the character on this team, I think, is also going to be at a high level.

**Hi:** *Last season, you coached players you didn't recruit or players you recruited on short notice. Was that difficult, and will it be easier this year, with some carryover?*

**Sadler:** I've got to be realistic myself. I'm not the easiest guy to play for. But I do think this also; any coach that's successful is not easy to play for because I think our standards are really high. So yeh, I had 13 new players last year. And some of them were able to play for me, and now as you mention, I've got a whole new team basically. Instead of 13 new ones, I've got eight new guys. And so this is closer to being more like the team that I would like to eventually put on the floor? But it's not there yet either. It's not completed.

**Hi:** *How quickly did last year's team understand what you expected?*

**Sadler:** I think probably after the first day of individual workouts. Really, I guess, no one ever believed how hard we were going to work, and I think from that day on, they understood I'm a pretty easy-going guy off the court, but when we walked on the court, I was going to demand them to be at a level they didn't think they could get at. So it didn't take long.

**HI:** Is it difficult for a coach to convey to players that teaching isn't personal, that when you get on them it isn't personal?

**Sadler:** It's harder now than it probably was. A lot of times the players we're getting now have never been told anything but how great they are. So I'm really the first person that has told them that "maybe you're not as great as you think you are."

More importantly, "you don't play as hard as you can play, and I'm not going to accept you not playing as hard as you can play. You tell me you're playing hard and I'm telling you you're playing soft." I have no

problem telling them that.

So, yeh, it's hard for them to understand. I think knowing how much I'm going to demand on the floor with them is another reason why I try to spend a lot of personal time with them off the court. It's one of the reasons I wanted my office set up the way it's set up, with glass doors and glass windows so that when players do walk by, they feel comfortable coming in no matter who's in here. I don't think you could demand as much intensity-wise as I want to demand and not have a relationship. I want to have a relationship with them and I want to demand them to do things they think they can't do. I think

you've got to have both those things to do that.

**HI:** Do they have a hard time understanding that?

**Sadler:** I've been asked this question: Why do you allow some of your players just to call you Coach Doc or Doc? To me the word "Coach," anybody can use that word. I'm more of a person that I want to have the respect of those guys. I'm not worrying about that. That's not my ego to get involved and think that, "Well, I'm somebody bigger and better than they are." Because I'm not. I'm here to help them, and I think I can help them, but at the same time, for me personally, to get to what I want to get out of them, I've got to have that relationship.

I think you can have both. Some people think you can't have both. I think you can have the tough love and you can have the fun love. That's the way I am.

**HI:** Doesn't that approach demand more emotional energy from you?

**Sadler:** No question. I don't have many strengths. I'm not very smart or any of that stuff. But I do think I have that talent. I think I've been blessed with the ability to do what I'm talking about doing. And yeh, it takes more energy because you spend more time with them off the court. But it comes easy for me to do, I guess, that part of it does.

**HI:** A coach who takes the other approach by setting up barriers doesn't have to expend as much emotional energy in dealing with players, right?

**Sadler:** Yeh, you're not spending the time. When I recruit a kid, I tell them, I tell their parents, that they're fixing to have the best four or five years of their life. And I want to be a part of that, and not just on the basketball court. I want to be a part of it off the court, whether it be a road trip or whatever. Now I want to win as bad as anybody. But at the same time, I realize it's not the end of the world, you know? And I think our kids understand, if you give me what I ask for you to give me, we might not be happy, but we can accept it. ■

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# 10 YEARS Ago . . .

**Huskers Illustrated** looks back at some of the top stories of 1997

**Sept. 20, 1997:  
Volume 17, No. 9**

## NEW KID ON THE BLOCKS

Pushing himself to follow the examples set by former Pipeline members has senior Fred Pollack starting as the only new member of this year's line.

## PRIMARY COLORS

Can Terry Pettit's deepest team in 15 years blend into a well-balanced and fear-striking piece of art?

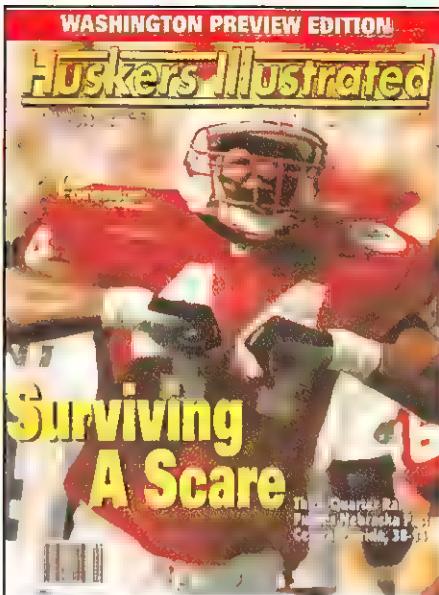
## FROST, LONDON SHARE SPOTLIGHT IN HUSKERS' 38-24 WIN OVER UCF

Tom Osborne was unmistakably agitated when he met with reporters following Nebraska's surprisingly difficult 38-24 victory against Central Florida. His words dripped emotion.

The agitation wasn't a result of the difficulty the Cornhuskers had in dispatching Central Florida, though that was a matter of concern to Osborne, what with Washington up next in Seattle.

Rather, it was a result of the response to some in the crowd of 75,327 at Memorial Stadium when quarterback Scott Frost ran onto the field with 3:58 remaining in the first half.

Frost was greeted with boos, and "I didn't like that," Osborne said. "I don't think that has any place in this stadium,



to boo a player who's playing well. I don't think that's even in the realm of what's practical."

The circumstances that elicited the uncharacteristic response were these. On Nebraska's previous possession, sophomore Frankie London had replaced Frost and directed an eight-play, 65-yard touchdown drive, which he finished off with an 8-yard run to give the Cornhuskers a 14-10 lead.

London carried one other time on the drive, also for an 8-yard gain, and completed his only pass, for 30 yards to the Central Florida 13-yard line. Kenny Cheatham made a diving catch.

The drive was impressive enough that the fans who booed apparently expected London to return the next time the Cornhuskers gained possession of the ball. That wasn't the plan, however.

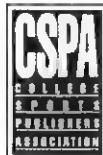
London went in when he did, not because Frost wasn't getting the job done but rather because that was Osborne's plan. And the plan didn't include London's return, regardless of what he accomplished.

"We told reporters yesterday — and that's the thing I want to get very clear to everybody who goes to that stadium — what we're trying to do is make ourselves a better football team," Osborne said.

After Friday morning's walk-through, Osborne said he intended to use London during the second quarter. He was quoted to that effect in Saturday morning's Lincoln and Omaha newspapers.

"We're not demoting Scott Frost," he reiterated after the game . . . ■

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# Commitment to Coach

Answering the question is unavoidable for a coach during recruiting: Do you intend to be around for the next four or five years? Or do you have other plans?

The question has been asked of him "several times in the last few months," Bill Callahan said.

Recruits and parents visiting his office wanted to know "what my status was, where I was headed," he said during his Tuesday news conference the week of the Wake Forest game.

"I told them, 'I'm going to be here.' But I think this is the proof of the pudding that I want to be at Nebraska. This is where I want to finish my career. I said that the first day I came in here."

Moments earlier, athletic director Steve Pederson announced that Callahan had signed a new five-year contract that runs through Jan. 31, 2012. Callahan's initial six-year contract, signed in 2004, included annual compensation of \$1.5 million. The new contract is for \$1.75 annually, with incentive bonuses worth as much as \$425,000 annually. The new contract is retroactive to July 2007.

The contract was finalized the previous week but not signed until earlier that day. "We'd like Coach to be here for a long time, and we've been working on making sure that happens," said Pederson, who received a contract extension himself through June of 2013 in late July.

"This is a commitment to Coach Callahan. It's important to him. It's important for our staff. It's important for our team. It's important for our recruits. And it's important for our athletic department. We strongly believe that the ingredients are in place for success both now and well into the future."

The new contract represents "a commitment on our part to say to him, number one, we appreciate what he's done and, number two, we believe that long-term there's going to be a lot of good things happen around here," Pederson said. "We want he and his staff to feel comfortable continuing to do things in the right way and continuing to build this in the fashion that we can all be proud of."

"We do want them to know we want them to be here a while."

Callahan has surrounded himself with people "who are the very best in the business," said Pederson. "That's one of the other jobs a head coach has to do, assemble great people around him. It's as fine a coaching staff as I've ever seen assembled, and I think I've seen some pretty good ones."

Stability within the program is essential to success, Pederson said, "and we've had historically good stability at Nebraska. Coach Callahan has come in here and worked very hard over the last three years to re-engineer this and get us in a position where we can have a lot of success."

"When he arrived here, one of the things that impressed me the most in my conversations with Bill was that he understood where we were. He understood what needed to be done, and he did not lay out all the reasons it was going to be difficult. Not everybody did that."

"Oftentimes, you can get focused on the problems and the things you have to overcome. And yet he believes like I do that this is a very special place and, really, the opportunities here are limitless for great success in college football. He has never wavered from what he's trying to get done."

Callahan's first three teams went 5-6, 8-4 and 9-5, winning the Big 12 North last season and playing in a second consecutive bowl game. In addition, he has recruited "at the highest level" from day one.

"In terms of what he's done for the program, I would say he's certainly met or exceeded my expectations at this juncture of the program," Pederson said.

"It all depends on whether you look at where we really were or where we maybe hoped we were when he took over. He did what great coaches do and that is, he looked realistically at where we were and said, 'This is how we're going to

get this fixed going into the future.'"

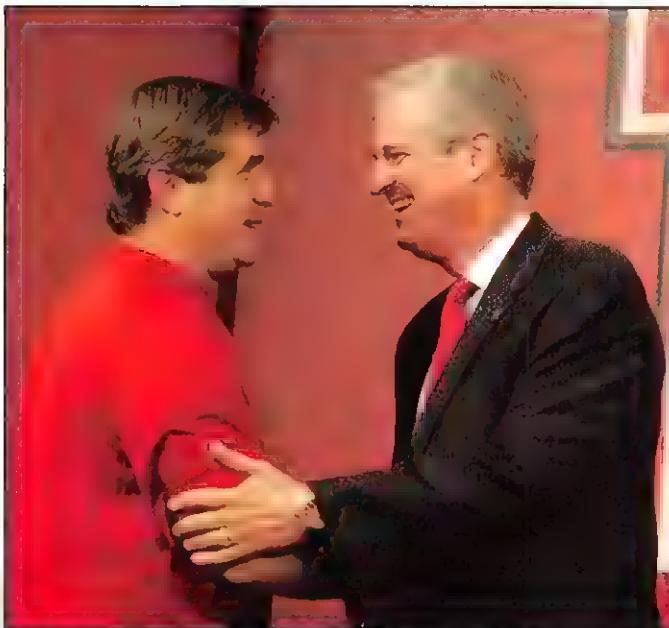
Callahan's contract doesn't have a buyout provision. "I've never believed in buyouts," said Pederson. "I believe this, if a coach only stays at a place because he can't get out, then you probably don't have a coach that wants to be there . . . I want a coach who wants to be here."

"Coach has said in every way possible he wants to be the coach here a long time. And that's the way we're approaching this. I don't believe there's a better job in the country than Nebraska."

Apparently, Callahan doesn't either. "As I had stated many times, I wanted to be here, and I think it's indicative now that I am committed to being here at Nebraska," he said.

In response to a question about his vision for the program, Callahan referred to a head coaches' meeting with Pederson earlier that day. "He voiced the fact that Nebraska's not about winning games, it's about winning championships," Callahan said. "So that's the goal."

Recruits and their parents want to know that as well. ■



Athletic director Steve Pederson (right) announced that coach Bill Callahan had signed a new five-year contract.

# QUICK HITS

## TALK IT UP

Among middle linebacker Corey McKeon's concerns going into this season was a lack of talkers on the defense. "There are not a lot of loud, brash guys with a lot of personality," he said prior to the start of training camp. "We need guys that are loud and entertaining, that can get in people's faces."

"I expect (Steve) Octavien to do that. I expect (Phillip) Dillard to do that."

In contrast, Bo Ruud and Lance Brandenburgh "are quiet guys," said McKeon.

The defense has to hit hard, and let opponents know it, he said. And it needs loud guys, "willing to be an idiot, basically, more willing to get in someone's face and be loud and joke around but get the job done," the senior from Naperville, Ill., said. "I think it's very important for our defense."

Among the freshmen, defensive backs Anthony Blue and Prince Amukamara are not only talented but also "like to talk, too, which makes it fun for me," McKeon said. "Those two are very loud."

"So it will be interesting to see how they integrate into the defense."

Amukamara is the talker, according to Blue. "He's a different type of person; he's cool, though," Blue said. "I laugh at the stuff Prince says, and might comment off of what Prince says."

Amukamara said he has "a really good sense of humor, so I make jokes. I'm very sarcastic, so everyone kept saying, 'I can't wait 'til he sees 'Coach E.'"

"Coach E" is cornerbacks coach Phil Elmassian.

"I'm not sarcastic to him," said Amukamara.

## UNFOUNDED CONCERN

As has been pointed out countless times since Bill Callahan's arrival, the walk-on program is very much alive and well. Senior wide receiver and special teams player Dan Erickson is the latest walk-on to be put on scholarship. The announcement came during training camp.

This issue's "10 Questions" subject (Page 12), Thomas Grove, is a freshman walk-on, one of five who were invited to training camp. In addition, the Cornhusker media and recruiting guide includes capsules of 16 walk-ons who were accepted for admission and indicated they planned to play.

Callahan and his assistants are as aggressive as their predecessors in recruiting walk-ons. The number of walk-ons has diminished, but that was the trend before Callahan arrived.

## WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

Senior Channing Anseth and junior Ari Goldstein are among seven returning letterwinners on coach Jay Dirksen's women's cross country team. Anseth and Goldstein finished 12th and 13th, respectively, to lead the Huskers to third place in the Big 12 championships last season.

Goldstein is the Husker captain, the first solo captain for the women's team since 2001. Senior Betsy Miller, a captain in 2006, is redshirting this season after suffering a stress fracture during track.

### ROSTER

**Seniors:** Channing Anseth (Lincoln, Neb.), Miller (Lodgepole, Neb.), Joslyn Dalton (Fremont, Neb.).

**Juniors:** Ari Goldstein (Soldotna, Alaska), Rachel Carrizales (Morrill, Neb.), Jennifer Pancoast (Cape Girardeau, Mo.), Sara Prince (Omaha, Neb.), Natalja Zarcenko (Valmiera, Latvia).

**Sophomore:** Elizabeth Marsh (Wichita, Kan.).

**Freshmen:** Lara Crofford (Newville, Pa.), Katie Kelly (Omaha, Neb.), Jennifer Webers (Conifer, Colo.).

## MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

Seniors Peter van der Westhuizen and Alec Maduza are the captains for the largest men's cross country team in 11 years. Eight of the 17 runners are freshmen. Van der Westhuizen, who underwent compartment surgery in late June, is the team's No. 1

runner, "our go-to guy," said Dirksen

Van der Westhuizen finished only three meets last season because of compartment syndrome pain. "How we do is going to start with him," Dirksen said. "We have to have him in the lineup."

"I think our success is tied to how quickly he gets back."

### ROSTER

**Seniors:** Peter van der Westhuizen (Kempton Park, South Africa), Alec Maduza (Shorewood, Wis.), Vince Sickler (Kearney, Neb.).

**Juniors:** Kyle Custer (Cambridge, Neb.), Andrew Lind (Lake Oswego, Ore.), Brian Parr (Fremont, Neb.).

**Sophomores:** James Laville (Carmichael, Calif.), Ethan Luebbe (Waco, Neb.), Bryce Somer (Yankton, S.D.).

**Freshmen:** David Adams (York, Neb.), Matt Conahan (Omaha, Neb.), Brad Doering (Yuba City, Calif.), Peter Falcon (Bellevue, Neb.), Todd Gulizia (Omaha, Neb.), Anthony Oberle (Sioux City, Iowa), Eric Thies (Arlington, Minn.), Mikel Thomas (Clovis, Calif.).

## SOCcer STARTS

Coach John Walker's soccer team opened the season with a 2-0 victory against Northwestern at home. Freshman Alexa Cardona and junior Sari Raber scored the goals, while freshman goalkeeper Jessica Mills recorded the shutout.

### ROSTER

**Seniors:** Jessie Bruch (St. Louis, Mo.), Meghan Hungerford (Manhattan, Kan.), Abby Penas (Grand Island, Neb.).

**Juniors:** Raber (Richmond, B.C.), Selenia Iacchelli (Edmonton, Alberta), Lauren Isenhower (Lenexa, Kan.), Aysha Jamani (Calgary, Alberta), McKensie Kirchner (Omaha, Neb.).



John Walker

**Sophomores:** Savannah Allen (Grand Island, Neb.), Julie Berkshire (Omaha, Neb.), Anna Caniglia (Omaha, Neb.), Shannon Dickerson (Highlands Ranch, Colo.), Brittney Lanier (Carrollton, Texas), Carly Peetz (Lincoln, Neb.), Brittany Pfeil (Norfolk, Neb.), Lindsay Poehling (Elkhorn, Neb.), Shay Powell (Dallas, Texas).

**Freshmen:** Cardona (Lincoln, Neb.), Mills (Houston, Texas), Brianna Eilman (Omaha, Neb.), Michaella Fulmer (Lee's Summit, Mo.), Colleen Goetzmann (Omaha, Neb.), Katie Goetzmann (Omaha, Neb.), Brittany Goosen (Olathe, Kan.), Rachel Hawryluk (Dallas, Texas), Jamie Sanchez (Lincoln, Neb.), Meredith Shuman (Omaha, Neb.), Blair Slapper (Prairie Village, Kan.), Anna White (Warrensburg, Mo.), Jaclyn White (Torrance, Calif.), Andrea Zuniga (Omaha, Neb.).

## BRIEFLY

• Junior I-back Marlon Lucky was named the national player of the week by the Walter Camp Football Foundation for his performance against Nevada. He rushed for 233 yards and three touchdowns on 30 carries and caught a touchdown pass in the 52-10 victory. He had 266 all-purpose yards.

• Senior right-side hitter Sarah Pavan was named the American Volleyball Coaches Association national player of the week for her efforts in the season-opening AVCA Showcase in Omaha. The award was Pavan's second and Nebraska's first since late August of 2005, when Christina Houghtelling earned it. Pavan also was the AVCA national player of the week as a freshman in 2004.

• The Huskers' season-opening, straight-set victory against Tennessee in the AVCA Showcase was No. 1,000 all-time. Only two other programs have reached 1,000 victories, UCLA and Missouri State. Nebraska disposed of UCLA the next night to improve to 9-0 in Omaha's Qwest Center. The record went to 10-0 a week later, when the Huskers defeated Penn State there, before a record crowd of 13,081.

• How about this? Peter Schrager simulated the 2007 college football season using EA Sports video game, NCAA '08, for FOXSports.com, and Nebraska finished the regular season ranked second in the nation behind LSU. The Cornhuskers lost the BCS national championship game to LSU, however, 34-17. That was Nebraska's only loss in the simulation, with Bill Callahan earning the award as "best coach." In addition, quarterback Sam Keller was a Heisman Trophy finalist; Louisville quarterback Brian Brohm, and Cornhusker defenders Steve Octavien and Zack Bowman were first-team All-Americans.

"This video game is eerily good at predicting things," Schrager writes. ■

# CROSSWORD

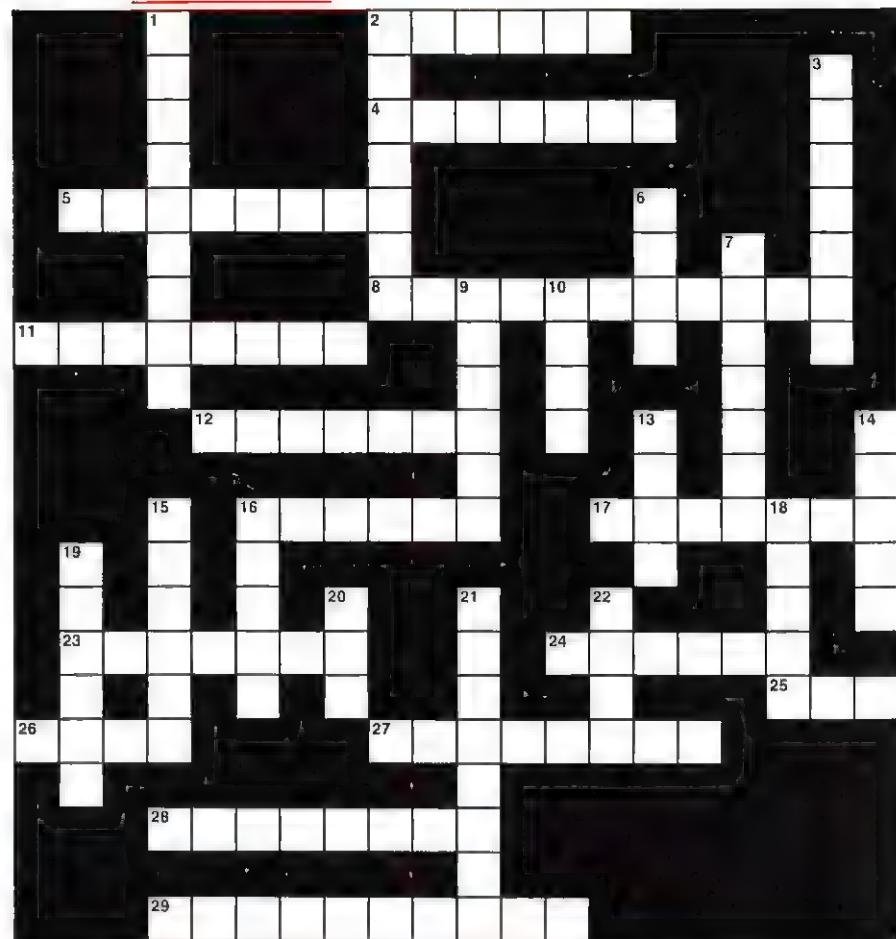
## ACROSS

- 2 Wears No. 16
- 4 Scored final TD vs. Nevada
- 5 Defensive coordinator
- 8 Defensive lineman injured in opener
- 11 Scored 2 TDs vs. Nevada
- 12 USC head coach
- 16 Ahman Green's NFL team
- 17 Kicked field goal vs. Nevada
- 23 USC nickname
- 24 Offensive coordinator
- 25 Wears No. 93
- 26 USC school color
- 27 Athletic director
- 28 Leading tackler vs. Nevada
- 29 USC campus location

## DOWN

- 1 Sept. 22 opponent
- 2 Brandon Jackson's NFL team
- 3 Wears No. 52
- 6 Number of TDs for Marlon Lucky vs. Nevada
- 7 2006 national champion
- 9 Stewart Bradley's NFL team
- 10 Wears No. 83
- 13 Wears No. 51
- 14 Wears No. 77
- 15 Offensive captain
- 16 Oct. 27 opponent
- 18 Dominic Raiola's NFL team
- 19 NU's 2006 bowl game
- 20 Sam Keller's former school (initials)
- 21 USC school color
- 22 Adam Carricker's NFL team

Answers in Sept. 22 issue



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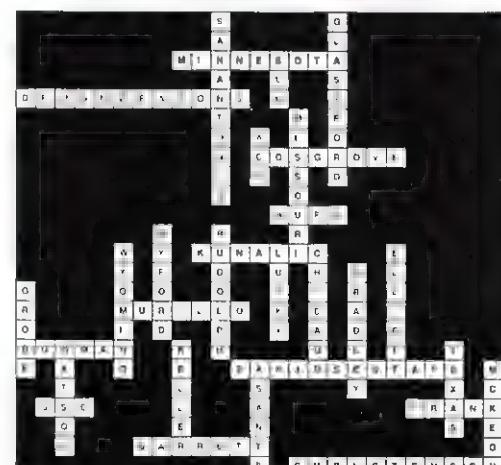
## IDEAS?

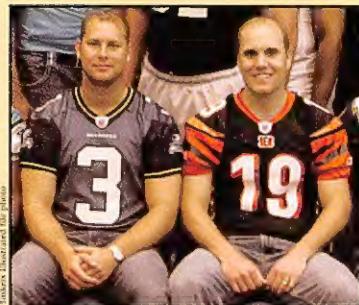
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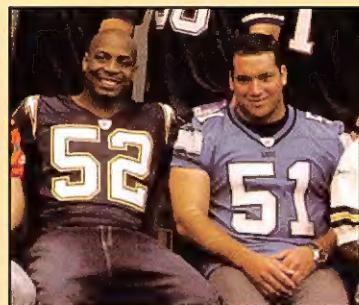
## SEPT. 8 CROSSWORD SOLUTION





Josh Brown (3)/Kyle Larson (19)

# Ex-HUSKERS IN THE NFL



Carlos Polk (52)/Dominic Raiola (51)

Sources: Huskers.com, NFL.com

Player	Team	Pos.	Yr.	No.
Ryon Bingham	San Diego Chargers	DT	3	97
Stewart Bradley	Philadelphia Eagles	LB	R	55
Josh Brown	Seattle Seahawks	PK	5	3
Kris Brown	Houston Texans	PK	9	3
Mike Brown	Chicago Bears	SS	8	30
Ralph Brown	Arizona Cardinals	CB	8	20
Correll Buckhalter	Philadelphia Eagles	RB	7	28
*Daniel Bullocks	Detroit Lions	FS	2	27
Josh Bullocks	New Orleans Saints	FS	3	29
Adam Carriker	St. Louis Rams	DE	R	90
Ahman Green	Houston Texans	RB	10	30
Russ Hochstein	New England Patriots	G	7	71
Richie Incognito	St. Louis Rams	C	3	68
Brandon Jackson	Green Bay Packers	RB	R	32
Trevor Johnson	St. Louis Rams	DE	4	93
Chris Kelsay	Buffalo Bills	DE	5	90
Sam Koch	Baltimore Ravens	P	2	4
Kyle Larson	Cincinnati Bengals	P	4	19
*Jay Moore	San Francisco 49ers	DE	R	58
Carlos Polk	San Diego Chargers	LB	7	52
Dominic Raiola	Detroit Lions	C	7	51
**Cory Ross	Baltimore Ravens	RB	2	40
Mike Rucker	Carolina Panthers	DE	9	93
Barrett Ruud	Tampa Bay Bucs	LB	3	51
Scott Shanle	New Orleans Saints	OLB	5	58
Le Kevin Smith	New England Patriots	DT	2	90
Kyle Vanden Bosch	Tennessee Titans	DE	7	93
Fabian Washington	Oakland Raiders	CB	3	27
Demorrio Williams	Atlanta Falcons	LB	4	51

\*injured reserve

\*\*practice squad

## A Big Red Presence

**Callahan says Nebraska fan following a factor in narrow victory in ACC country**



**Mike  
BABCOCK**

A BILLBOARD OUTSIDE Groves Stadium proclaimed "Paint It Black." It was not a reference to the Rolling Stones, however. Wake Forest's colors are black and gold.

The billboard is a reflection of the Demon Deacons' success last football season. They were ACC champions, winning a school-record 11 games and playing in the Orange Bowl game.

Bill Callahan referred to their being defending ACC champions more than once during his postgame news conference, to underscore the significance of his team's second victory. Winning on the road is tough against any opponent, he pointed out, much less a BCS conference champion.

So anyway, the billboard encourages Wake Forest fans to "paint it black" this season. But they failed in that endeavor on this particular clear-blue-sky, 90-degree Saturday afternoon in Winston-Salem, N.C.

This stretch of Tobacco Road certainly wasn't black. It was red.

At the International House of Pancakes located within a kickoff return of Groves Stadium, the red spilled out the door, worn by people waiting to be seated. Inside, a Wake Forest fan made the mistake of calling out his school's name. He was met with "Go . . . Big . . . Red, Go Big Red, Go Big Red."

Amber, a harried waitress serving in the midst of the clamor, said she had never heard or seen anything quite like it. And she didn't seem to be particularly amused, either.

A silver Chrysler with Cass County dealer license plates, plastered with more Husker signs than Memorial Stadium skyboxes, backed up and pulled out of the IHOP parking lot.

The street that ran past the stadium to the south, Deacon Boulevard, was awash in red, too, just about everyone outside the establishments in the immediate area, including the Pure Chrome Bar & Grille, which welcomed bikers, and farther up the street at Pig Pickins of America.

Even a ticket scalper along the boulevard was dressed in red.

The parking lot across Deacon Boulevard, adjacent to Joel Coliseum where Tim Duncan and Chris Paul once displayed their skills in the sport that means the most at Wake Forest, was filled with red-clad tailgaters who arrived early and stayed into the late afternoon, discussing the 20-17 victory.

A homemade sign propped up on a pick-up truck in the parking lot identified the Cornhusker boosters tailgating there as being from Level Cross, N.C., and Darlington, S.C., as well as from Beemer, Neb.

Eventually, they all would cross under Deacon Boulevard and settle in the stadium, which was at least a third red.

"Remember whose house this is," the public address announcer said with about 11 minutes remaining before kickoff. All things considered, that probably needed to be said on this day.

Attendance was 32,483, a very good crowd for Wake Forest — capacity is 31,500 — but the smallest to watch the Cornhuskers play since 1991, when only 30,150 showed up at Oklahoma State.

The Big Red hordes invaded Groves Stadium and made it theirs for a day, despite the distance and the fact that this community of 170,000 or so isn't the easiest place to get to.

An expansion project, with construction on-going and clearly in evidence, will make Groves Stadium (soon to have a corporate sponsor's name) the Wrigley Field of college football, a speaker on the video board proclaimed. "Make it an experience," the speaker said.

And Nebraska fans did, something Callahan appreciated.

"They were surely a factor, throughout the contest," he said.

The game wasn't what some of them expected, perfection in every phase, a whole lot of points to not very many, or better yet, to no points at all. Still, Nebraska is 2-0 for a third consecutive season.

Now the Cornhuskers return home to play No. 1-ranked Southern California.

"We've got to get ready for a great team," senior cornerback Cortney Grixby said. "They're No. 1 for a reason. We've got a challenge ahead of us. It's going to be crazy. The fans are going to be wild."

"You know how it gets down there. USC coming in, No. 1 team."

For those looking for historical precedent, Nebraska played Wake Forest and USC back-to-back in 1970, defeating the Demon Deacons in Lincoln and then tying the Trojans in Los Angeles a week later. The Cornhuskers went on to win the first national championship in school history.

In any case, they would turn their attention to USC on Sunday. "It starts tomorrow," said junior I-back Marlon Lucky, "celebrate tonight. But it starts happening tomorrow."

The celebration was well underway. Linebacker Steve Octavien was pulled away from the postgame interview area outside the locker room by shouts of family members who had come to watch him play. After answering reporters' questions, he joined them on the other side of the fence.

Soon, he was in the center of a group photo, surrounded by No. 15 replica red jerseys.

Paint it black? Not this day. ■

**Mike Babcock** is a former sports columnist for the Lincoln Journal Star. He has covered Nebraska football for nearly 30 years. Mike can be reached at [MBABCOCK@neb.rr.com](mailto:MBABCOCK@neb.rr.com) or P.O. Box 6782, Lincoln, NE 68506.



NU's Lydon Murtha cools off on the 90-degree day in Winston-Salem, N.C.

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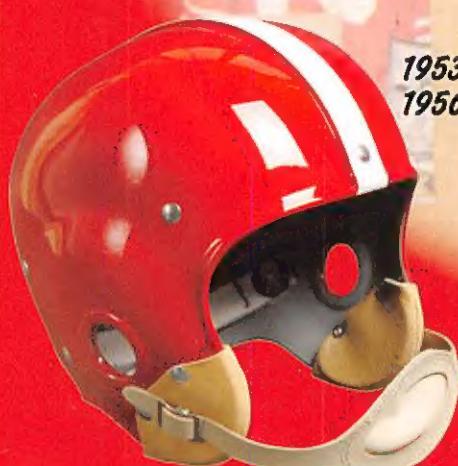
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